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world FILM news

BEN HECHT • C. A. LEJEUNE • MAE WEST • AL CAPONE

APRIL 1s.

at conscription

THEY WANT TO TAKE YOUR JOB AWAY!

CONSCRIPTION of whom for what? Compulsory service—if that sounds prettier—by whom, in whose interests? Let's look.

Money poured out of the City of London yesterday, New York bound, as wealthy folk (many of them heavy contributors to Government funds) and dual-bred merchant princes sent their fortunes to safety at dangerous hour.

Going to conscript them, Mr Chamberlain?

* * *

Look health . . .

The country is in danger. You can make a present of it for 17s. 6d., and make a profit . . .

THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 17 1938

HITLER'S TRIUMPH IN BERLIN

REICHSTAG TO MEET TO-MORROW

DIPLOMATIC UNEASINESS

From Our Correspondent

BERLIN, MARCH 16

Herr Hitler returned in triumph to Berlin this evening and received from immense, jubilant crowds the ovation due to an empire builder.

Almost the first thing Herr Hitler did after his return was to summon the Reichstag for Friday evening. It was reported that a Cabinet meeting was to take place to-morrow, but unexpected reason to believe, confirmation is yet awaited, that this serious ...

DUCE ON THE COUP

NO DANGER FOR ITALY

FIRMNESS OF THE AXIS

From Our Own Correspondent

ROME, March 16

Signor Mussolini spoke to-day in the Chamber of Deputies on the union of Austria with Germany. The speech, which had been announced yesterday and was widely broadcast, was clearly intended to dispel the apprehension aroused in Italy by the German action. It aimed at showing, first, that what had happened was inevitable, and, secondly, that Italy had ... to fear from it. It was a well-... and was notably free ... offence ...

NAZI PURGE IN AUSTRIA

HARASSED JEWS

GROWING ROLL OF SUICIDES

From Our Special Correspondent

VIENNA, March 16

The roll of suicides, most of which are not reported here, grows daily longer. This morning Major Emil Fey, Vice-Chancellor of Austria under Dr. Dollfuss and until yesterday president of the Danube Steam Navigation Company, ... found dead in his ...

ALIGHTING WITH NO PILOT

BOMBER LANDED BY ONE OF CREW

From Our Aeronautical Correspondent

The unusual adventure of a non-pilot who landed a fast bomber without injury to himself or his companion after the pilot in charge of the machine had left by parachute lies behind the award, just announced, of the Air Force Medal to Corporal T. E. Barnes, of the R... Force.

The adventure ... a flight ...

Reichstag

POLISH FRONTIER TENSION

"I BELIEVE that we shall best serve British interests, peace ... the cause of freedom ..."

... AGES AGAIN

PAGE 6

ONE P...

DANGER OF DRUG SCARCITY

From the Medical Correspondent

WAR at present might deprive the British Empire of drugs essential for the treatment of blood-poisoning, puerperal (child-bed) fever, syphilis, malaria, sleeping sickness and other serious diseases.

To prevent this the Medical Research Council, according to its annual report published yesterday, is to ... research on a national basis ... chemotherapy — the destruction of germs by chemical ... in the blood.

£30,000 A YEAR

In spite of our vast tropical domain, says the report, we are almost entirely dependent upon Germany for the supply of these drugs.

The Government is granting £30,000 a year for this research, but the first year's instalment will be taken up with building laboratories and offices.

The new Chemotherapy Institute is to be attached to the National Institute for Medical Research when it is built at Mill Hill.

BARCELONA AIR RAID AGONY

FOUR HOURS OF DEATH IN THE DARK: BIG NEW RAID TO-...

Huge Death-roll: Bar... in Flames

"FRANCO SHALL NO..."

Paris Report ...

...ESS MARCH 17, 1938

TROOPERS AGAIN!

6,000 FRENCH FOR SPAIN FRONTI...

From Daily Mail Cor...

EXTRAORDINARY ... by the French ... may arise if the ... It is believed ... away there would ... Six thousand men ...

...FEY, 'STRONG MAJOR,' KILLS HIMSELF

Shoots Wife And Son

VIENNA, Wednesday ...

L.M.S. Dismiss 100 Men For 'Economy'

THE L.M.S. Railway Company are to discharge about 100 men from their Crewe locomotive works this week owing to shortage of material and limitation of capital expenditure.

This decision was yesterday conveyed to a works committee which is a negotiating body between ... and the management.

Alderman John Smith, chairman of the committee, said he expected about 100 men would be taken from the ... ending August 20 from the machine ... 15 from the tender shop and the ... number from other departments ... to avoid hardship, the principle of ... men to be discharged would be ... men and those who were junior ... service.

Tests would be made by the trade ... to ascertain employment for the ... to armament work.

... are over 8,000 men in the ... works at Crewe.

...orsey Wall Holds

... wall across the beach ... Hershey sandbills on which men ... night and day held fast ... the full force ... Hershey's gun volleys over the ... the North Region.

... Barrack ... which fails.

Inside the ... children—Dr. Alfred ... called to approve ... measures" of national ... which the Cabinet discusses ...

Suddenly the cheers of the ... crowd were frozen to silence by ... the warning note of the air-raid ... alarm, followed almost at once by ... the first explosion of the bombs.

That was three hours ago ... Since then—while a million people have huddled in the air-raid shelters—the city has re-...

THURSDAY, The Daily Mail, MA...

N

G.P.O. GIRLS' GAS DRILL

Things T... Do NOW

... perhaps for several hours until the ... in the neighbourhood has been cle... away.

Although I am addressing this ... you primarily to you, Mr. Citizen, ... you might like to pass it on to fri... who have smaller or larger houses. ... I give you the experts' estimate th... room 15ft. by 10ft. will hold seven ... sons, and a room 20ft. by 12ft. 12 ... as one for a continuous period of 12 h... without ventilation.

AVOID PANIC

The Air Raid Precautions ... have thought of everyone in ... plans to make Britain safe—you, ... Carrington, and those who cannot ... leave to a home such as yours. ... policeman of different uniform ... sections of the community. It is ... old, old story of "United we stan...

If you have your doubts about ... practicability of a refuge room ... be that any room within which ... is safer than being out in the ope...

Panic must be avoided at ... costs. And there will be no ... for panic if you realise y... unpleasantness, now ...

Heavy Stock Slump— More Big Losses

From the City Editor

STOCK markets had another depressing day yesterday, every section showing further falls. The pace of the decline was, if anything, accelerating, and among industrial shares especially the losses on the day were severe.

Here are some typical move-...

Associated Cements lost 5s. 9d. on the day and have lost 12s. 6d. over the past week; Bovril were 1/- down on the day and 12s. on the week; Imperial Tobacco 1s. 3d. down on the day and 2/3 on the week.

... a week ago were 14¼, fell to 9⅞ and ... at this figure ... heavily ... sold.

Dollars and gold have received ... impetus of the all round ... ... ensuing the markets. Dollars were ... again in demand from all over the ... world yesterday, and in London they ... improved from 4.86¼ to 4.86⅝.

STOCK EXCHANGE

NERVOUS AND DEPRESSED

ALL-ROUND FALL

Although there was a virtual absence of ... such as those which occurred on Tuesday, ... a highly nervous ... on a ... persistent and ... sheer Crash! ... continuous ... Hopes that ... dollars. From the ... in the opening de... ... in the late af...

MONEY

DOLLARS IN ...

RALLY IN ...

The state of ... prevailed yesterday ... in the foreign ex...

Inside News

3. Tribute to lay magistrates
3. John and Gwen make the King laugh.
3. Labour shortage on the canals
7. £1,500 fine for income tax frauds.
11. Women lead rush of A.R.P. volunteers.
11. Danger of drug shortage
11. Publishers recall a novel.
13. Labour demands Lord Swinton's dismissal.
15. Baronet rejects conscription.
15. Inquiry into coal distribution.

TODAY'S WEATHER (from 11 ...

forget it all at the pictures

—for choice ONE OF THE BERNSTEIN "service-with-a-smile" THEATRES . . . . .

GRANADA	TOOTING
GRANADA	WALTHAMSTOW
GRANADA	WOOLWICH
GRANADA	CLAPHAM JUNCTION
GRANADA	BEDFORD
GRANADA	EAST HAM
GRANADA	CHEAM
GRANADA	GREENFORD
GRANADA	GREENWICH
GRANADA	HARROW
GRANADA	MAIDSTONE
GRANADA	SHREWSBURY
GRANADA	SLOUGH
GRANADA	WANDSWORTH ROAD
GRANADA	WILLESDEN
GRANADA	WELLING
CENTURY	CHEAM VILLAGE
CINEMA	LOUGHTON
COUNTY	SHREWSBURY
EMPIRE	BEDFORD
EMPIRE	EDMONTON
EMPIRE	SHREWSBURY
HIPPODROME	MANSFIELD
KINEMA	PLUMSTEAD
KINEMA	WEST HAM
KING'S	SHREWSBURY
PLAZA	MANSFIELD
PLAZA	SUTTON
PLAZA	RUGBY
REGAL	OSWESTRY
REGAL	RUGBY
REGENT	RUGBY
RIALTO	ENFIELD
RIALTO	LEYTONSTONE

Under Construction:

GRANADA	EAST MOSELEY
GRANADA	WOODFORD

THE BERNSTEIN THEATRES LTD., 36 GOLDEN SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

Some phrases seldom ring true

"I remain, your obedient servant"

but

YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

Two of the most remarkable documentary successes in recent years are now available for theatrical distribution . . .

'Could be included in any exhibitor's programme'
—THE CINEMA

CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

★

"An enormously moving and persuasive piece of film craft" **—THE OBSERVER**

"How well they act, these unpaid, untaught Shirley Temples" **—SPECTATOR**

THE SMOKE MENACE

★

"A matter of serious public concern"
— MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

Any Theatre interested in booking these should write to Film Centre, 34 Soho Square, W.1.

Already available

ENOUGH TO EAT? Distributed by Kinograph Distributors Ltd., 191 Wardour Street, W.1

SCRATCH MEAL with MARCEL BOULESTIN Distributed by Associated British Film Distributors, 169, Oxford Street, W.1

WORLD FILM NEWS

APRIL 1938

Vol. 3 No. 1

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Still: Gary Cooper in *The Adventures of Marco Polo*

Nothing Sacred About My Stipend Either: Interview With Ben Hecht 4. 5

Animals on Parade: by *Stuart Legg* 6. 7

Al Capone Is Going Mad: by *H. E. Blyth* 8. 9. 11

Make-Up, "the Shadows we paint on Human Faces": by *Jack Dawn* 12. 13

Cameramen In The South Seas: by *John Taylor* 14. 15. 31

Crime Does Not Pay: by *Glen Norris* 16. 17. 18

Behind The Screen: by *John Grierson* 18. 19

Cartoons: by *Isabel Simeral Johnson* 20. 21. 22. 23

North Sea: by *Harry Watt* 24. 25

Four Out of Fifty: by *Thomas Baird* 26. 27. 28. 29

Cameramen In The South Seas (*Continued*) 31

Films Reviewed: by *John Grierson* and *Stuart Legg* 32. 33

The Month's Releases, Selected by *C. A. Lejeune* 34. 35

Review of Reviews 36. 37. 38. 39

Cockalorum: by *Rodney Hobson* 40. 41

"No Gen'l'men": The Mae West Broadcast: by *Glen Norris* . . 43

"Not B——y likely" 45

Film Guide 46. 47

Radio Speech: by *George Audit* 48

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(*Associated Press*)

"NOTHING SACRED ABOUT MY STIPEND EITHER"

Interviewed for America's 'Variety' by Radie Harris, BEN HECHT expresses himself forcibly on present Hollywood production methods, film public and exhibitors, and explains why he is in favour of playing backgammon on the set.

BEN Hecht, looking somewhat like a Goldwyn "folly" himself, in a blue moire dressing gown, sat in the living room of his three-room suite at the Hotel Algonquin, N.Y., and confided that he had just finished his daily dozen for the year by elevating his right thumb to his nose and waving all other four digits exuberantly in the direction of Hollywood! It seems that Mr. Hecht and his latest employer, Samuel Goldwyn, have had a tiff, and now they're farther apart than Cecil Beaton and Conde Nast.

"I left in a childish huff," Hecht explained, "because Sam wouldn't allow me to bring a few of my friends in to the projection room to look at some of the rushes on the *Follies*. I asked Sam whether it was in a desperate effort to save it from the public, but I'm afraid the significance was lost on him. I didn't really want to write another *Follies*, anyway. The current one was revealed to me in a dream—and you know how unreliable dreams are—so I packed my luggage, crossed off a couple of zeroes on my next year's income tax, and here I am back in New York, to write a novel for Covici-Friede, my first since *A Jew in Love*. I'm about a third way through now, but it won't be finished for another year. I'm calling it *Book of Miracles*—and it has no picture possibilities." (That's one of the major miracles; it will most likely be sold from the galley proofs!)

As a matter of fact, Hecht has a great admiration for Goldwyn. When the latter called him in to look at the rushes of *The Hurricane*, after the picture had been in production for several weeks, he asked Hecht his opinion of it.

"I think it stinks," answered Hecht, telling the truth with a sledge hammer.

"So do I," was Goldwyn's comeback. "I want you to rewrite it."

And while Hecht recuperated from the shock of meeting a Hollywood producer who could stand honest criticism, Goldwyn took a terrific loss and started from scratch.

"Goldwyn is a genius—after a picture is finished," Hecht declares. "He smoothes and polishes until it is like a cameo—perfect in every detail. He can tell within 20 per cent of what the gross will be. He has a projection mind. He can look at tests endlessly; five, six, seven days—who counts? He has a good stomach for pictures.

"On the other hand, Selznick, for whom I worked on *Nothing Sacred*, hasn't Goldwyn's showmanship, but he's a terrific guy on stories. He carries a phantom typewriter with him wherever he goes."

HOWEVER, what Hecht thinks of the current method of Hollywood production, the current film public and the current crop of exhibitors, wouldn't pass the NBC censor board—minus Mae West in her *Garden of Eden*. Expurgating it for reading purposes, it goes something like this:

"Catering to the imbecilic type of moron who clutters around first nights and hotel lobbies, pleading for autographs, in the delusion that this public must be served, is just so much pap. Half of these whacky kids never go into a picture house, because if they did they might miss 'Dolly Delovely' at a theatre a few blocks away. The only way to de-

Ben Hecht, forty-four years old: one time journalist, now screen writer. Wrote the story for 'Front Page', the first great newspaper film, and the screen play of the newest film about newspaper ballyhoo, 'Nothing Sacred.'
Outstanding film work includes writing the story for 'Scarface', and the writing, or collaboration in the writing, of 'Design for Living', 'Viva Villa', 'Barbary Coast', 'Once in a Blue Moon', 'The Scoundrel', and 'Crime Without Passion', which he helped produce and direct.

feat this public, who unfortunately symbolize the 'Great American Movie Public' of today, is to substitute them with a new public—and the only way to do that is to have Hollywood go into the state of collapse it is inevitably heading for, and start anew with a sane production budget.

"A picture that should cost 200 grand has to gross two and one-half million dollars to break even, and in order to meet this profit it has to cater to a vast undiscriminating audience. Cut down on these gigantic production costs, which only serve to feed a producer's ego—make a picture, a good picture, for less than a million, and to hell with catering to audiences, exhibitors, actors, writers, directors, etc., etc.

"Here's an illustration to prove my point. Several years ago I wrote a story called *Scarface*. Paul Muni, who had been kicked around like a gong at the old Fox studio, came over to U.A. playing the title role for a couple of hundred dollars a week. We signed a young Valentinoish looking wop for the second male lead, and gave him $75—his name was George Raft. The girl who played the heroine had been an extra at MGM—we gave her $50. She's done all right for herself, too—her name is Ann Dvorak. The picture grossed $3,000,000. Remember another picture called *Underworld*? George Bancroft and Evelyn Brent thought they were pretty lucky to be in it, even though the Government didn't take away half of their salary. It was grossed $4,000,000.

"Lombard and March cleaned up more than a quarter of a million between them on *Nothing Sacred*—and there was 'nothing sacred' about my weekly stipend, either; it was positively indecent! I would have taken less, but nobody asked me to. As for March and Lombard, they both turned out pretty swell pictures in *Laughter* (Par) and *20th Century* (Col), minus that gargantuan salary. The point I'm trying to prove is that I could have made *Nothing Sacred* on a far more conservative budget than Selznick (exclusive of the technicolour, of course) and it still would have been a good picture!"

At this point, the insistent ringing of the phone diverted Hecht from his analogy. It was his erstwhile co-producer and playmate, Charlie MacArthur.

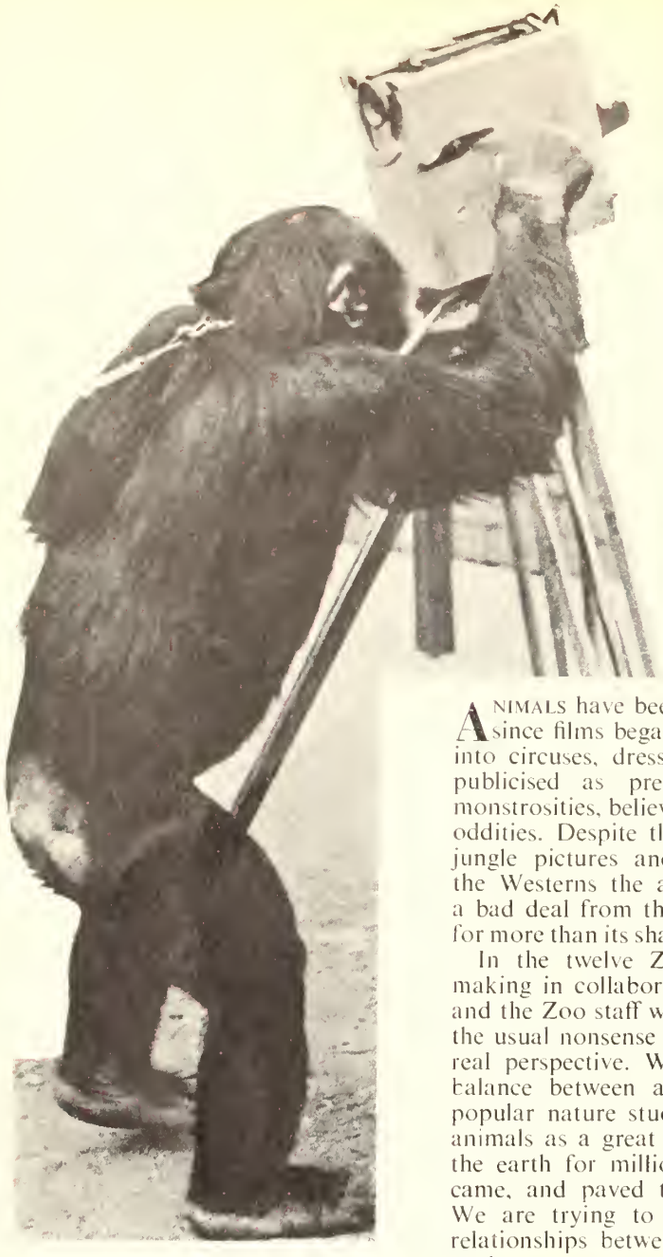
It was the perfect cue to ask when the Messrs. Hecht and MacArthur were to resume their zany partnership again—or had they forsworn pictures for all time?

"But certainly not," Hecht demurred. "I'd rather do a movie anytime than a stage play—it's far more fun. We were considered two screw-balls when we were working out at Astoria, because we played backgammon on the set and didn't hold conferences in our office every lunch hour. The reason we didn't hold conferences was because we couldn't get into our office—it was always packed with the strangest looking people, and the reason we played backgammon on the set was because it gave us an added interest in our work!

"Front Page", the first great film of newspaper life.

"Seriously though, we didn't waste 50 bucks on extraneous matter—like travelling across the country with a print of the picture and the entire cast in tow—or throwing cocktail shindigs for the press—or staging Hollywood premieres simultaneously in 24 cities, so that we could quote Mrs. Ipswich telling the world, 'that it would be a crime to miss *Crime Without Passion*'—or making 5,692 tests of unknowns, and then using a player under contract—or running three weeks behind schedule, because for those three weeks we were 'on location' in the conference room. No, long before *The Seven Dwarfs* our slogan was 'Whistle While You Work'—only the next time we do it, we'd like to have the help of a kid named Bill Fields.

"A few years ago Gene Fowler and I wrote a story for MGM which was supposed to suit the talents of Marie Dressler. We grabbed the opportunity of writing in a part for Bill. When we finished the yarn we weren't surprised when it was rejected—the story turned out to be a starrer for Bill Fields, with Marie Dressler playing his stooge!"



ANIMALS ON PARADE

The new wonder films of the Zoo described by Stuart Legg

ANIMALS have been exploited on the screen since films began. They have been turned into circuses, dressed up as human beings, publicised as pretty-pretties, boosted as monstrosities, believe-it-or-nots, and Nature's oddities. Despite the dignified beasts of the jungle pictures and the horses that made the Westerns the animal kingdom has had a bad deal from the movies. It has come in for more than its share of cheap sham.

In the twelve Zoo films that Strand is making in collaboration with Julian Huxley and the Zoo staff we are trying to get behind the usual nonsense and put animals in their real perspective. We are trying to strike a balance between academic knowledge and popular nature study. We are trying to see animals as a great branch of life that ruled the earth for millions of years before man came, and paved the way for his coming. We are trying to show something of the relationships between man and the animals to-day.

We took as our central theme the gigantic story of animal evolution, and most of the films are keyed to some aspect of this story as it affects animals to-day. Thus, one film deals with animal emotions and the ways in which fear, the basic emotion, has been turned to caution and courage and aggressiveness in the fight for survival. Another shows that man's conception of Time is a narrow-minded affair beside the vastly differing times and speeds of life in the animal world. A third tells the story of the hand from its beginnings as a fin to the skilful modern hands of the ape and man. A fourth shows how evolution, coupled with the changing shape of the earth in bygone ages, distributed the animals about the world; how, over a hundred million years, they built up their kingdom; and how man with his methods of mass-destruction bids fair to annihilate it in a few hundred.

The problem of moulding these and like themes into film shape was twofold. First

Male Penguin takes a turn at hatching the egg (*'Zoo Babies'*)

Looking for me? (*'Free to Roam'*)

we had to get the facts. The Zoo Library (75,000 volumes) was placed at our disposal. From the works of the anatomists, pathologists, physiologists, biologists, veterinaries, travellers and chatty persons that lined its shelves it appeared that science had assembled a formidable quantity of knowledge about animals. It seemed, too, that these scientists were a somewhat quarrelsome lot, delighting in controversy one with another. In our ignorance we could not tell who were the authorities and who the impostors. But the curators came to our rescue, and from that moment our respect for the Zoo has never waned. They knew all the knowledge; they even knew who was right and who was wrong. Secondly, we were faced with the animals themselves, 6,500 of them. All, with the exception of the more vulgar man-like creatures such as the chimpanzees, leaned against the bars and regarded us and our cameras with cold dignity. Psychologists might have called them non-co-operative.

Donald Alexander started the series off with his film on the relative size and weight of animals. He tackled an immensely difficult subject bravely. He set out to show why insects cannot weigh more than five ounces, why birds must be comparatively small, why elephants grow no larger than they do, why fish are not bound by any of these size restrictions. He marshalled his animals superbly, and his facts, if anything, not wisely but too well. He ended up by proving, among other things, that angels cannot fly and that the sperms which begot everyone on earth could be crammed into a space the size of an aspirin tablet. A little alarmed, we called the film *Mites and Monsters* and hoped for the best. The censor obliged with a "U" certificate.

Next came Evelyn Spice with a lively and charming study of mothercraft methods of the animal world called *Zoo Babies*. Ranging freely from the lowest to the highest, from fish spawn to the human child, she showed the different systems of reproduction and upbringing employed to ensure continuity of species. She showed fish dumping their myriad eggs in the water and leaving their young to survive by force of numbers; she demonstrated that the higher an animal comes in the evolutionary scale the more helpless are its young and the longer is the period of education necessary for its self-preservation. Into a film filled with movement and vitality, and surprisingly free from the usual sentimentalities, she packed a remarkable amount of solid information.

MEANWHILE other units were in the field. At Whipsnade Paul Burnford was busy drawing the distinction between the old Linnean method of studying animals under classificatory labels and the new spirit of scientific observation of behaviour under conditions as near as possible to the natural. He called his film *Free to Roam* and ended it with a sequence of Whipsnade at night. The lithe jungle shapes padding through an English undergrowth of gorse and bramble and the dismal chorus of wolves under English pines are terrifying enough.

In the London Zoo, Ruby Grierson, like Daniel in the lions' den, was shooting human beings from the animals' point of view. Her film, *The Zoo and You*, is the comic-relief act of the series. It has many gentle comments to make on humanity and one or two nasty cracks. And if the animals are daily treated to the sights her cameras saw, then those who believe in the cruelty of placing God's creatures behind bars should chase themselves. The Zoo animals get the best free show ever.

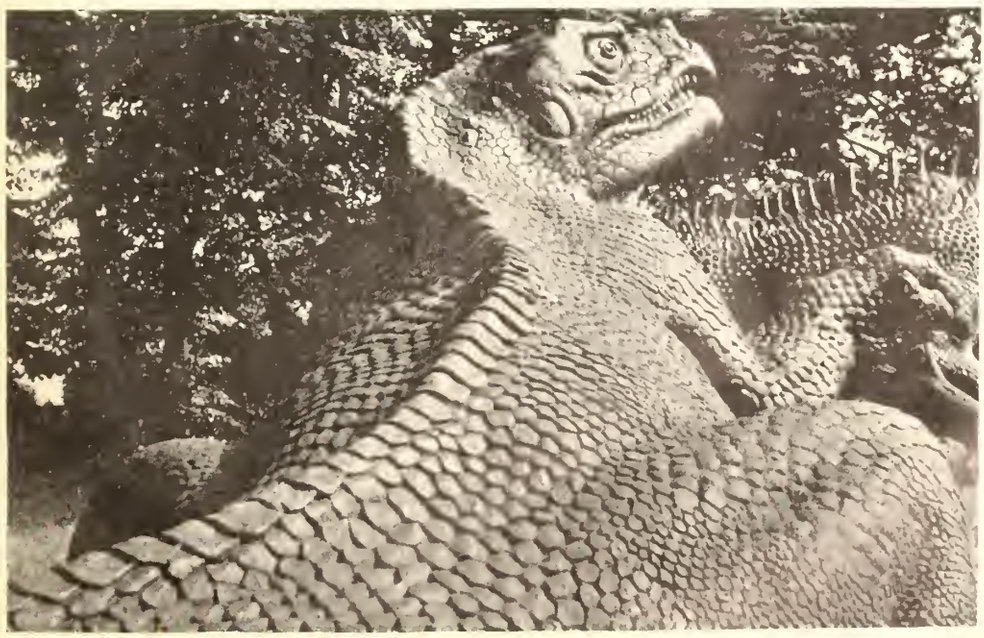
Stanley Hawes, with George Noble on the camera, was turning in sensational rushes of baboons and gibbons. We had been anxious to include a film in the series devoted to monkeys and apes, and we were fortunate enough to have the collaboration of Dr. Zuckerman of Oxford, one of the greatest living experts on the primates. With Zuckerman's researches at his disposal, Hawes shaped the film round the social behaviour of monkeys. He examined their families and packs, and emphasised the importance to their society of the rule of the dominant male. At the same time he traced the evolution of their intelligence through co-ordination of brain with hand and eye. *Monkey into Man* is particularly interesting for the skilful balance it strikes between academics and popularity. It avoids the obvious traps about "our ancestors", kills a number of fallacies and replaces them with truth; and the truth in this case is certainly stranger than fiction. The sequence of gibbons swinging through the trees is likely to create something of a furore.

"Non-Co-operative"—Jimmy, the Tiger (*'The Zoo and You'*)

The final film in the first set of six is a survey, again by Evelyn Spice, of the work done behind the scenes at the Zoo. It deals with the efforts made in laboratory and field to improve the conditions of captive life, with the routine jobs and with the thousand and one emergencies that arise in the daily care of animals from all parts of the world. It introduces you to some of the well-known Zoo people and presents the Zoo, also, as a public relations department for the animal kingdom, with its Information Bureau and Art School and special facilities for study. Its hero is a small Capuchin monkey, Rastus by name, who arrives from South America with a cargo of other animals and settles into his new home.

This, then, is our first batch of Zoo films. To us they represent a vast deal of patience, and a co-operative effort between all branches of the Zoo service and the film people which bodes well for future schemes for bringing science and its results to the screen in dramatic form.

There are six more films to come. They will be finished, animals permitting, in the late Spring or early Summer. For it is the animals who have the final say in these pictures. They dictate scripts, camera positions, action and cutting. And they do it with a confidence which would put some of our big producers to shame.



Not a job for St. George—Just a camera study of the model of a Dinosaur at Crystal Palace (*'Mites and Monsters'*)

AL CAPONE IS GOING MAD

—The story of 'Scarface' Capone's rise and fall told by H. E. BLYTH

ALPHONSE CAPONE is going mad. In his cell in the U.S. Penitentiary on Alcatraz Island, California, gangland's greatest "big shot" goes in daily fear of his life. He who boasted in his hey-day that he never double-crossed a pal has been squealing on his fellow-convicts, and they have sworn to get him. Already he has been stabbed in the barber's shop with a pair of scissors.

The story of "Scarface" Al is almost unbelievable—written in a novel it would be condemned as wildly impossible. Even Hollywood's gangster films in their most extravagant moments have never exaggerated the actual state of affairs that once existed in Chicago. People then were killed in spots as public as Regent Street or the Strand—Jake Lingle, crime reporter of the *Chicago Tribune*, was bumped off in a subway as crowded as Piccadilly Circus at rush hour.

Hollywood, if anything, has tended to minimise the gangster's activities; there has seldom been any exaggeration in the pictures it has made of gang warfare, wildly impossible though some of them may have seemed. Moreover, Hollywood, in glorifying the gangster during the period before the advent of the G-man, was doing no more than the general public of America had already done. To many Capone was a hero. He gave lavishly to charity, he lived in utmost respectability with his wife, he patronised the arts. He was a devotee of grand opera—*Rigoletto*, *Il Travatore* and *Aïda*. He was fabulously wealthy, a sure sign of merit in the eyes of all business men. And above all he was a showman, always in the public eye. During the hard winter of 1930-1931 he opened a soup kitchen in Chicago and fed between two and three thousand people daily.

To one and all, therefore, Capone was a "right guy". And no one believed more implicitly in this tradition than Capone himself. The cinema merely took him at his own valuation.

Thus was the great gangster tradition born in the cinema. This is why so many gangsters on the screen have also been "right guys", and why so many of them have been devotees of good music. The gangster film has always been based on fact, for it has done no more than write a page of American history which posterity will view with amazement.

Dozens of famous gangster films have either wittingly or unwittingly reconstructed actual incidents in the history of the crime lords. Grace Moore's picture *On Wings of Song*, for example, bore a marked resemblance to the story of Big Jim Colosimo, Chicago's first "Big Shot", who fell suddenly and desperately in love with Dale Winter, an opera singer, whom he finally married. Miss Winter, alas, was very soon a widow. In *G-Men* there was a reconstruction of the unsuccessful ambushing of John Dillinger at the Little Bohemia Road House in the Wisconsin Woods, while in *Public Hero No. 1* his death is pictured, although in the film he is seen leaving a vaudeville performance while in reality he was shot down outside the Biograph Cinema, on Chicago's North Side, after seeing Clark Gable's gangster picture, *Manhattan Melodrama*.

More recently, there was an echo of the trial of Charles "Lucky" Luciano, the vice lord, in Bette Davis's film, *Marked Woman*. And here it should be emphasised that vice, even more than booze, has always been one of the gangster's basic sources of income. Colosimo, Torrio, and Capone were all said to be proprietors of an extensive chain of brothels where negresses used to hold daily classes in perversion for young girls. Only O'Banion would have nothing to do with vice.

But of all gangster films, *Scarface* probably comes the nearest to telling the truth, though the exact outline of actual fact has not been followed. Those who now read here for the first time the true story of the real "Scarface" can compare the incidents of his life with those depicted in the film. And if they have thought in the past that Hollywood has been guilty of exaggeration in its gangster films, they can now compare fact with fiction. Not even *Scarface* tells the whole truth, or plumbs to its foulest depths the diseased mind of gangland's most infamous killer.

Of all gangsters, Capone was the greatest. Colosimo, Frankie Yale, Dillinger, Jack Diamond, Baby Face Nelson, John Scalise, all of whom died a violent death—these were "Big Shots", but Capone eclipsed them all. Not even Dion O'Banion, that smooth-tongued, smiling Irishman, ex-choir boy, florist and teetotaler, and one of the most pitiless killers Chicago ever knew, equalled Capone in cunning and cruelty. Not even O'Banion's henchman, Earl Hymie Weiss, who smeared his bullets with garlic so that they might poison if they did not kill, and whose ingenious brain gave to gangland and the films that ghastly ceremonial known as "being taken for a ride"—not even "Little Hymie" could outwit Al Capone. O'Banion

The revival of the screen classic 'Scarface', with Paul Muni, George Raft and Ann Dvorak has given our critic H. E. Blyth an occasion to tell the story of Chicago's number one Gangster, Al Capone, on whose career much of the film 'Scarface' was based. The real story of the greatest gang war in history makes an even more bloody and exciting story than its screen version.

Police reconstruct the St. Valentine's Day Massacre (*Associated Press*)

and Weiss are pushing up daisies, their bodies riddled with bullets by Capone's gunmen.

One by one they went, like the ten little nigger boys, until only "Scarface" was left. "They'll never pin anything on me" said Al, "My lawyers will take care of that". Alleged murderer, racketeer, beer-baron and brothel-keeper, he lived in opulent state, driving down Michigan Avenue in his £4,000 bullet-proof car, his £10,000 eleven-carat diamond ring on his finger, the lord of all he surveyed. And if there was a horse he fancied in the races at Hawthorne, he'd bet a cool £20,000 on the nose, just to show what the "Big Shot" was worth.

In the late twenties, when he was at his zenith, his yearly income was reckoned at more than £6,000,000.

But in the end they got him. Not for murder, vice or boot-legging—his lawyers saw to that—but just for income tax evasion, something he had not foreseen. His slick legal pals could not clear him of that charge.

THE story of Capone is the story of Chicago during the black decade of 1920-1930, when law and justice became a mockery, and the biggest crime wave in history engulfed the city. Between 1923 and 1926 alone there were 135 gang murders, only six trials as a result, *and only one conviction.* Just how many murders Capone himself was responsible for, no one will ever know. "Scarface" —and he was nicknamed that because of a knife wound received in a brothel brawl— preferred to remain largely in the background, and indeed would often be out of town when his gunmen were at work.

Capone was brought to Chicago in 1920 by John Torrio, then the leading gangster of the day, having taken the place of Big Jim Colosimo, prematurely deceased. Like Torrio himself, Capone was a graduate of the notorious Five Points gang of New York, and was, therefore, "plenty tough". At first he was just a brawler and a bully, a foul-mouthed hoodlum ready to tackle any job on hand. By 1924 he was already a "Big Shot", suave, urbane, sleek and prosperous, no longer Torrio's bouncer, but his partner and right hand man, and it was in 1924 that he was concerned in his first really big killing.

At that time the greatest rivals to the Torrio-Capone outfit were the North Side Gang under the leadership of Dion O'Banion. By the autumn of 1924 trouble was brewing between them. Torrio and Capone had taken over control of Cicero, a suburb of Chicago, but O'Banion had been given a beer concession out of which he quickly began to make a fortune, for everything that O'Banion touched turned to gold. Torrio and Capone were green with envy and tried to make a deal with the Irishman, even going so far as to offer O'Banion a share of their brothel takings in return for a fourth of his booze revenue, but O'Banion only sneered. A ruthless and cold-blooded killer, he yet had a refined dislike of the vice racket, and would have nothing to do with it.

On November 10th, at mid-day, a car stopped outside O'Banion's flower shop in North State Street, and three men got out, leaving one behind at the wheel. O'Banion came forward to greet his customers with hand outstretched, for he knew them well. One clasped the proffered hand and held it in a vice-like grip, while the other two poured a stream of bullets into the Irishman's body. Then they left unhurriedly and drove away, leaving O'Banion dead amongst his flowers.

The funeral which followed was the most remarkable the city had ever seen. The body was laid out in a £2,000 casket, brought especially from the East. One hundred and twenty-two cars followed in the procession, and there were twenty-six truck loads of flowers, valued at more than £10,000. Amongst these floral tributes was a magnificent basket of roses—"From Al".

In the mortuary chapel Torrio and Capone faced O'Banion's henchmen over the coffin. Barely a word was spoken, but each knew what the other was thinking. The greatest gang war in history had begun.

It lasted for four years and three months— from November, 1924, until St. Valentine's Day, 1929—and at the end of it Capone was left supreme.

With O'Banion in his grave, his gang went gunning for revenge. They chased Torrio all over America, to the Bahamas, to Cuba and back, and in the end they got him, shooting him down on the steps of his house in Chicago as he returned with his wife from a shopping expedition. By some extraordinary chance they failed to kill him, though they riddled him with bullets, but Torrio had had enough. A broken, terrified man, he shook the dust of Chicago from his feet. Thus only Capone was left.

On January 12th, 1925, the O'Banions— now under the leadership of Weiss, "Bugs" Moran and Vincent Drucci—made gangland's greatest single attack ever launched against one man in their desperate determination to get Capone.

(*continued on page* 11)

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Continuing 'Al Capone is Going Mad'

Paul Muni, Karen Morley and George Raft in a scene from 'Scarface' (Ace Films).

He was living then at his headquarters, the Hawthorne Hotel in Cicero. It was 11.15 in the morning, and the day of the Hawthorne Races. Al was in the restaurant on the ground floor, having a late breakfast.

Suddenly a car passed down the road, firing a machine-gun. As it disappeared Capone rose from the floor where he had instantly fallen, and was going to investigate when his bodyguard hurled him to the ground.

"It's a trick, boss—there's more to come!"

There certainly was.

A cavalcade of seven cars came slowly down the street and stopped outside the hotel. Then the occupants began systematically to spray the façade of the building with bullets. One man stepped out of the sixth car and unconcernedly set up a Thompson submachine gun on the pavement, sighted it carefully and poured a hundred shots in rapid fire into the lobby. Then he returned to the waiting car and the cavalcade moved off down the street and was gone.

Capone, miraculously, was unhurt. The O'Banions had failed to avenge their leader, and their turn was soon to come. Capone knew how to take care of his enemies.

In the following October Hymie Weiss was put on the spot. They said of him that he was the only man Al ever really feared, and he was not easy to get. He was cunning, was "Little Hymie".

So the Capone gunmen went to considerable trouble. They rented a set of rooms overlooking the Weiss headquarters—above the flower shop of his late-lamented leader—and trained a battery of guns on the exit. Then they waited—waited for more than a week until the right moment arrived.

On the afternoon of October 11th they saw Weiss step from his car, accompanied by four friends, and cross the road to the shop, laughing and chatting gaily. The guns opened fire and Weiss and another dropped stone-dead on the pavement; the rest were

Al Capone, now in Alcatraz.

badly wounded. The outside of the Holy Name Cathedral across the way was pock-marked with bullets.

Capone was quite upset. He couldn't understand, he said, why anyone should want to kill poor Hymie.

He sent a nice big wreath to the funeral.

But there were still several O'Banions left. They were to be reserved for the bloodiest mass murder that Chicago was ever to witness—the massacre of St. Valentine's Day, February 14th, 1929.

After Hymie's death, George "Bugs" Moran took over control of the O'Banion gang. Bugs and Hymie had been together on the Hawthorne shooting affray, when Capone had been so amazingly lucky. Now it was "Bugs" Moran's turn to be lucky.

Only a master mind could have planned the St. Valentine's Day massacre. It was the work of a fiendishly ingenious brain.

On the morning of February 14th the Moran crowd had assembled at a garage on Clark Street to receive a large consignment of stolen liquor which "Bugs" had bought over the telephone the night before. He had bought it unquestioningly, evidently from someone he knew well and trusted. There were seven of the gang present, and they stood around waiting for "Bugs" to appear, but "Bugs" was unaccountably late. Perhaps the gangster's sixth sense had warned him that something was in the air. Anyway, "Bugs" did not show up.

Instead a police car arrived, and out stepped several officers in uniform. The gang were annoyed, but not unduly disturbed. These raids were routine affairs which often occurred; usually they could be "squared" without much trouble.

The gang were told to put their hands above their heads and to line up against the garage wall, which they did, grumbling not a little at this police officiousness. Their lawyers would have something to say about this.

Meanwhile two men in ordinary clothes had entered the alley which led to the garage. One carried a machine-gun, the other a double-barrelled sawn-off shot gun. The machine-gunner set up his weapon, aimed carefully for a spot half-way up the spine, and opened rapid fire. The seven men were mown down like grass, and lay on their backs on the concrete.

The man with the shot-gun stepped over to them and carefully finished off those who still showed any signs of life.

The murderers returned to their car and left. Pedestrians who saw them did not give them another thought. It was just another police raid, a commonplace occurrence. They drove away unhindered.

And thus was the O'Banion gang finally annihilated and all real opposition to Capone removed in one fell swoop. Scarface was left supreme, with not a care in the world. His enemies were all dead, or if not dead, their spirits were broken. He was the "Big Shot" of all time, the uncrowned king of crime. The world was at his feet.

"They'll never pin anything on me", said Al.

And now, in his cell in Alcatraz, he sits and shivers with fear, his fat, coarse body shaking like a jelly, his diseased mind trembling on the brink of insanity. The story of "Scarface" is almost finished.

MAKE-UP

"the Shadows we paint on Human Faces"

By JACK DAWN

head of M.G.M.'s Make-up Department

IT used to be a generally accepted belief that there are some people who "do not photograph well". The assumption was that these people, whatever their talents might be, were debarred from the screen, and there was nothing that could be done about it. Nowadays, though this legend to some extent persists, it simply will not stand examination in the light of modern make-up knowledge and methods.

The old idea was based on the theory that only men and women with high cheek bones and very broad features photograph well; that delicate features are not treated kindly by the camera. The only grain of truth remaining in this belief to-day is that less make-up is required to achieve fine photographic values from the face of a Myrna Loy—a beautiful example of the "broad and high" bones theory. But with some care and skill equally fine photographic values can be obtained with the delicate features of Virginia Bruce, whose facial bones are tiny. In other words Miss Loy's beauty comes over almost without make-up aid, while to bring out on the screen the beauty that Miss Bruce's face possesses in real life, a little high lighting at the sides is necessary. But there is no more to it than that.

Photography is essentially a matter of relationship between high lights and shadows. The make-up technician has to keep this in mind all the time and co-operate with the camera.

Make-up, in the sense in which the term is used outside films—beautification by the use of cosmetics—is the most trivial part of the work of the film studio make-up department. It is not the peak achievement of my work, but the basis of its routine to be able to make photographically attractive, with fifteen moves of my hands, any normal man or woman in the world. The only exceptions I make are faces that are unbalanced to the point of deformity. Any normal defects, such as twisted or too-thin lips, drooping eye muscles and sagging chins, I can correct easily.

The value of this ability to film production in general is that actors and actresses can now be chosen strictly for their ability, and not because they are suitable types. In the old days before film make-up had justified itself as a plastic art capable of co-operating in the creation of character and not a mere preliminary to photography, a producer who had to cast an actor as Abraham Lincoln, for instance, had to find a man who looked more or less like Lincoln. To-day he is in the much more satisfactory position of being able to choose a man who can *act* Lincoln. Making him look like the character is the work of the make-up department.

There was another case of this "Presidential problem" more recently when our studio made *The Gorgeous Hussy*. Lionel Barrymore was to play America's seventh President, Andrew Jackson. Anybody less like Jackson than Barrymore it would be difficult to find. Yet when the make-up department had finished, his own features were gone, and in their place was a life-like replica of the face of "Old Hickory". Barrymore's new face was practically a mask, yet there was no visible sign of artificiality. None of the main features

—the forehead, the nose, nor the chin—was his own. The substance with which I achieved this result has, in my opinion, enabled character creation in make-up to reach a point of perfection never before attained.

Probably unknown to the average film-goer, a revolution has taken place in screen make-up in comparatively few years. In the silent days the type of film used was called "orthochromatic". This kind of film demanded weird colour combinations. Blue photographed as white, and red as black. These were the days when a film player ready for work was an extraordinary sight, often with bright blue eyelids and brilliant red under-chins. The first advance came with the introduction of the "panchromatic" film, which permitted the use of natural colours. . . .

When the present supersensitive film—known as the "superpan" came in, it revolutionised the lighting used for photography, and once again the whole field of make-up was changed.

In the old days, for instance, we used painted lines a great deal for wrinkles. With the film of to-day these would look, not like wrinkles at all, but like painted lines. The old technique has completely vanished.

ONE of the pioneers of the new method, long before its use became general, was Lon Chaney, who developed the trick of applying plastic materials to his face. When he wanted wrinkles he cut them in. Nowadays age is indicated almost entirely by what are called "contour inlays". These achieve the illusion of age convincingly by following nature itself in portraying the shape of the face rather than merely contributing lines to the existing shape. In *The Good Earth* there is a perfect example of this kind of work on an important character, Soo Yong, the old Chinese woman.

The same film afforded some major problems of make-up, although Oriental make-up as a whole is nowadays comparatively simple, whereas it was once the most difficult, and came to be regarded by make-up men as a kind of bogey. To achieve an Oriental effect, we used to draw the eyes upward by the use of gum and fine membranes painted over. Now, by drawing a shadow downward from the inside of the eye and upward from the outside, we can achieve the correct illusion. We also use facial inlays with great effect.

In *The Good Earth*, the problem was not merely to make-up Luise Rainer as a Chinese, but to find the perfect make-up for her. In this case modern methods of the make-up studio came to Miss Rainer's rescue. In the old days all the experiments would have been done on her long-suffering face. Both she and I would have been nervous wrecks, before the task was over. Instead, I made seven clay heads before I struck the one I wanted. This had more than one advantage. It cut down the length of time I had to spend working on Miss Rainer's own face, and, as character make-up is always a laborious process, it certainly saved us both from frayed nerves and fatigue.

An interesting psychological point arises too. The human face must be to some extent a "canvas" for the make-up artist, but he must never forget that it *is* a human face. The mood of the subject is important. It is a character make-up and should blend with the character that is going to be created in the finished performance. If the subject is tired or without enthusiasm, the finest make-up will give a wrong impression and be rendered worthless. Clay models and paintings in colour enable me to visualise make-ups before putting a finger to the human face, and I believe that whatever success I have attained is due to the fact that I am by early training and inclination an artist. Knowledge of art saves time and worry in experimentation. It is not necessary to be a trained artist to be a make-up technician—but it helps.

It is my belief that the basis of screen make-up is artistic rather than scientific or technical. For example, when I recently wished to add six members to my staff, I interviewed more than 500 applicants, and each one I picked had graduated from an art institute. . . . The importance to me of this group of youngsters I have taken under my wing is that they are being trained from the start on the new lines of screen make-up. It is being impressed on them that their knowledge of facial contour, anatomy, sculpture, and painting is of vital importance.

I HOPE I have not given the impression that my department is a kind of artistic research and experimental studio, because it must be remembered that we also deal with the daily demands of routine make-up for all the people who go before the studio cameras. Some idea of the volume of work done may be obtained from the quantities of material we use. In a year we require more than 1,000 large cans of face powder, 3,000 lb. of grease paint, 500 lb. of false hair for beards and wigs, 20 gallons of spirit gum, and 50 lb. of assorted waxes and plastics. . . .

Many men wear no "straight" make-up at all, and women much less than they used to. Apart from the photographic development involved, the introduction of talking pictures has influenced make-up. Effects that used to be achieved with false teeth, scars, and stretched skin have disappeared, because nothing must be done which will impede speech, or even make an actor feel unnatural, for the effect will be to make his work unnatural.

The "shadows" we paint on human faces, the inlays with which we build up new faces, the oils with which we can transfigure a face, the new basic colours devised to suit the new sensitive film, are the angles of our work which will matter more and more in the future. . . .

This article is extracted from Jack Dawn's contribution to the book "Behind the Screen", edited by Stephen Watts (Barker, 8/6). *See Review on pages 18 and 19.*

The picture heading the article shows Jack Dawn at work on Eliza[illegible]en. With his brush he is creating[illegible]ows, without which the glaring[illegible]MENT PE[illegible] the set would cause the ca[illegible]OU MEAN[illegible]se the subtleties of light and shad[illegible]NG CAN BE[illegible]raphing the actress's face.[illegible]QUENCE

The Month's Newsreel

Air Raids in Barcelona. Pictures taken by Richard Butler, Pathé Cameraman

CAMERAMEN in the SOUTH SEAS

The story of an expedition to Thursday Island

reviewed by John Taylor

Up from Australia, sailing towards the cannibal jungles of Papua, go two natives of Hollywood, Shackleford cameraman and Dromgold scenario writer. In the hold are sixty-two cases of equipment. Cameras, recording set, rubber spear heads and blonde wigs.

Between them these confident gentlemen have got to get shots for back projection; long shots with Dromgold doubling for a star; scenes of a Papuan canoe sea fight; scenes of a village being attacked, a sequence of Papuans capturing the hero's pearling lugger ending with the hero and a doubling dusky Papuan maid with blonde wig and Fifth Avenue tea gown swimming under water to the shelter of an old wreck.

At Thursday Island they pick up a lugger to take them along the coast of Papua to Port Moresby, the administrative centre where they have to get the Governor's permission to shoot.

[illegible] that pass between them and [illegible] the rest of the story:

[illegible] MUST AWAIT GOVERNOR'S [illegible] NG PERMIT – BUSY PRE- [illegible] ERFECT – WEATHER IDEAL [illegible]

GET STUFF WITHOUT FAIL – STEP ON IT WHEN GOVERNOR OKAYS – SHOOT TRIBAL WAR FIRST – VILLAGE SCENES NEXT – MAKE WAR CANOE CHASE THRILLING – GET SHIPWRECK – PEARL DIVING SEQUENCE VERY IMPORTANT NOW OWING TO RECENT CHANGE IN STORY – REGARDS.

The Governor gives them permission.

CONGRATULATIONS – GLAD TO HEAR YOU ARE WORKING AT LAST – DO NOT FAIL TO GET SAVAGE ACTION IN ALL SCENES – HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE PICTURE SUPER FEATURE – REGARDS.

The Governor changes his mind.

Villages were perfect, the weather ideal, but Cameramen George Dromgold and James Shackleford found filming in the South Seas far from easy. Their adventures on Thursday Island, recently published as 'Two Lugs on a Lugger', are racily recounted by John Taylor.

★ ★ ★

GOVERNMENT FORBIDS ALL SCENES WITH NATIVES IN WARLIKE COMBAT – ALL NATIVE WEAPONS REAL OR FAKES BANNED – FEEL WE CAN GRAB OFF ENOUGH LONG SHOTS OF SPECTACULAR MASS ACTION TO INTERCUT WITH SAVAGE CLOSE SHOTS – WILL MAKE TRY IF YOU OKAY – REGARDS.

But the Studio doesn't.

WHAT NEXT? – GET STUFF NO MATTER HOW – YOUR PLANS O.K. – SEND US FILM NOT CABLES – GET GOING – REGARDS.

The rainy season is just about to start. It is hot and humid. The boat is crawling with cockroaches, but they reckon that they will manage somehow.

PLAN OKAY – FILM RECEIVED LOOKS LIKE REAL STUFF – KEEP GIRLS AND WOMEN OUT OF FOREGROUND ALL SCENES – NOT ENOUGH GRASS ON THEM TO GET BY CENSOR – DON'T USE BLONDE WIG ON DOUBLE FOR STAR – SHE REFUSES TO PLAY PART – USE BRUNETTE WIG – SHOOT BALANCE OF STUFF SOON AS POSSIBLE – SEND US FILM NOT WEATHER REPORTS – GOOD LUCK.

Wearily along the coast they go—marshalling four hundred canoes here—a thousand natives there. The rainy season starts. There isn't a pearler on the coast—"Although of course twenty years ago there were hundreds" the locals say.

Above: "The Blonde." Heading the opposite page is a picture of Pearl Fishers. Both illustrations are from "Two Lugs on a Lugger" (Hutchinson)

SHIP DOZEN NATIVE CANOES HOLLYWOOD FOR MATCHING SHOTS – WHY NUDE OLD MEN DANCING IN SCENE 172 – WATCH EXPOSURE MORE CAREFULLY – HURRY PEARLING SEQUENCE – GET ALL ANGLES – MAKE IT BIG – VERY IMPORTANT – REGARDS.

In return.

WILL SHIP CANOES IF GOVERNMENT PERMITS – REGARDING EXPOSURE DID YOU MEAN CAMERAS OR NATIVES – NUDE DANCING CAN BE CUT OUT – WILL GET PEARLING SEQUENCE SAMARAI – REGARDS.

Three weeks later.

ARRIVED SAMARAI – NO WORD FROM YOU – IS FILM O.K. TO DATE – HOPE SHOOT PEARLING HERE – REGARDS.

Then after a chase that has lasted nearly three months they catch up with an old pearler, the last on the coast, and he is making his last few dives before handing his boat over to the local pawnbroker.

Shackleford and Dromgold sigh with relief—They have worked long and hard.

(Continued on page 31)

Two typical scenes from the fast-moving "Crime Does Not Pay" series. The top picture shows Robert Taylor making his first screen appearance in "Buried Loot".

"CRIME does not PAY"

The Story behind the famous M.G.M. shorts told by GLEN NORRIS.

To the inquisitive tourist America is paradise. When he has done the round of its natural beauties and man-made show places, its amusements and horrors, its food and its sin, he is only just beginning. For then, if he pleases, he can start visiting its factories and workshops, its places of business. For in America to-day there is not one organisation depending on public goodwill, that does not make "showing people round" one of the main planks of its propaganda programme.

Would the inquisitive tourist like to explore the 70 storey Rockefeller Center Building in New York—one of the tallest, largest, strangest office blocks in the world? Far from being considered a nuisance, the I.T. will find himself welcomed by a staff of uniformed guides, who will offer a free show for his delight on almost every floor. From the third to the tenth, he can gape through glass panels into the studios of the National Broadcasting Company. In the giant Radio City Music Hall, he can peep at the world-famous Rockette dancing girls rehearsing. On the sixty-fifth he can gate-crash into the Rainbow Room restaurant where at night he couldn't get dinner for two under £3. From the roof of the seventieth, he can gasp at the New York skyline, write in the visitor's book as did one provincial: "Close to Heaven—Homesick". Last year 250,000 visitors made the R.C.A. Building one of America's tourist shrines.

But the strangest of such shrines is on the fifth floor of the Department of Justice Building in Washington. There the I.T. walks in to be startled by a glaring white face staring at him hollow-eyed from the wall. It is the plaster death mask of John Dillinger, once America's Public Enemy No. 1. In a nearby showcase is the straw hat the outlaw was wearing when he was shot down, his blood-stained jacket, his glasses smashed by bullets. By the time the I.T. has taken in all this, another of those smiling, uniformed guides has appeared, to show him round the headquarters of the Federal Bureau of In-

In making the "Crime Does Not Pay" series M.G.M. broke all the sacred rules of the picture world. And they have provided, says Glen Norris, some of the most potent propaganda and most thrilling entertainment ever seen on the screen.

vestigation, home of the G-Men, America's Scotland Yard.

He will see the sort of guns that gangsters use. The guide will use all the actor's tricks of dramatic suspense in describing how the G-Men trail malefactors. There will be cunning scientific traps which have been the undoing of kidnappers, bank robbers, and murderers. There will be all the thrill of a man-hunt, with the action indicated by blinking lights on a map. At the end of the tour, the I.T. will be invited to have his finger-prints taken—so that if his body were ever badly mutilated in a crash, it could probably be immediately identified. Finally, he will be given a card with the print of one of his fingers, and the caption: "Souvenir Print. F.B.I. Director: J. Edgar Hoover". And from then on, the I.T. will almost certainly be a missionary. In what he says and thinks, he will be helping to spread a movement that has been built up and fostered by Edgar Hoover, until to-day it has burst far beyond America's frontiers—a crusade against crime on an international basis.

Several years ago, Edgar Hoover decided that getting the criminals was not enough. He wanted to try and prevent crime; and he felt that one way was to start a gigantic build-up about the almighty, invincible power of the government's anti-crime forces, of which he was Director. So books about the G-Men began to appear; the press started running the story of the "dare-devils" who never failed to "get their man"; Edgar Hoover's face got into the newsreels; the name "G-Man" got into the world's vocabulary. Guided by Mr. Hoover, the tide of anti-crime propaganda rose and rose, until many a British school-boy knew more about G-Men than about Will Shakespeare. But the most interesting development was yet to come; in the shape of help for the crusade from a most unexpected quarter. Mr. Hoover did not know it, but he was destined to be responsible for one of the most startling new movements in the world of cinema entertainment.

If this story has so far seemed to wander a long way from the film box office of its title, the reason must lie in the need for painting the backcloth of present-day American life, which the Directors of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer saw at the beginning of 1937. They saw millions talking and thinking about the anti-crime movement; they saw it making daily headlines in the press; they saw the G-Man ousting the gangster as a figure of fiction. Here was an obvious set-up for the cinema to cash in on a big topical story. Yet it required courage, vision, and foresight on the part of M.G.M. in deciding to make a series of short films under the general title: *Crime Does Not Pay*. For these films were to be made as no other shorts had ever been made before. They were not to be fiction, but a reconstruction of true facts. They were to be blatantly propagandist. They were to be made with all the technical care and advance preparation that M.G.M. uses for its biggest features.

In laying down that programme, M.G.M. broke all the rules: that truth spells death at the box office: that the paying public won't stand propaganda: above all, that shorts are only the crust of the film-programme pie, and cannot pay their way unless they are made dirt cheap.

Now, a year later, this bold policy has been completely justified. The *Crime Does Not Pay* series has been a raging success from every point of view. It has produced some of the most potent propaganda ever seen on the screen; it has provided thrilling entertainment that has out-classed many a feature, and it has been making money. The measure of that success is also the measure of how well its production job has been done.

Each of the series follows the same general line. It sets out to expose one particular racket, which may appear in slightly differing forms all over America. In a dramatic build-up, the case is first put for the criminals. Half way through the picture, it invariably looks as if the racketeers' scheme is foolproof; they have thought of everything, nothing can possibly go wrong, crime is bound to win. Then comes an almost unbearable suspense—innocent men and women are in danger. The G-Men get on the trail—and after a calm, scientific explanation of the way they go to work, they proceed to smash up the danger in a rip-roaring, galloping finish. Finally, as the criminals go off to gaol, the voice of the G-Man speaks: "Once again you have seen proof that *Crime Does Not Pay!*"

BUT the story they tell is often less interesting than the way they tell it. For the *Crime Does Not Pay* series has achieved some of the fastest moving scripts in the whole field of non-fictional cinema. Because every scene is staged, they start with a gigantic advantage over the average newsreel, in having the whole tempo of the action completely under the director's control. Even *The March of Time* is often forced into a slight limp by the fact that it depends on a considerable amount of newsreel material. But each *Crime Does Not Pay* scene punches out its message with the speed and force of a steam hammer. In essence, the story moves somewhat like this:

[*Close-up of Johnny's head in a telephone booth.*]

JOHNNY: O.K., Elmer. I'll be in your office at five o'clock to talk over . . .

[*Dissolve to Elmer's office.*]

ELMER: Now get this, Johnny. Jameson must be stopped before he reaches Newtown. Take the truck and go out on the Rockway Road, so as to reach the level crossing just as . . .

[*Dissolve to level crossing at night. As Jameson's car stops at the gates, Johnny's truck draws alongside. A muffled shot. Jameson is dead. Cut to Police Inspector's office.*]

POLICE INSPECTOR (*at phone*): What! Jameson shot at the Rockway crossing! Well, doesn't that just give us what we want on Elmer . . .

(Continued on next page)

(Crime Does Not Pay—contd.)

[Cut to Elmer's office. A knock—Police Inspector enters . . .]

The idea for each story comes straight from Edgar Hoover's files. Then the rough outline goes right through the main M.G.M. scripting department, receives all the sifting and polishing of a fully fledged feature. In fact, the full feature style of work goes right through production. Most shorts are made either by technicians in training, or by men who concentrate on that job because they can't find a better in the main studios. But for *Crime Does Not Pay*, M.G.M. uses most of its star directors and cameramen during the odd periods when there is a lull in their main work. That fact explains much of the technical sparkle, that has sent the series skyrocketing to success. But the casting presents the most surprising variation from normal practice.

The first of the series was called *Buried Loot*. It presents the story of the bank clerk who embezzles $100,000, buries his treasure, confesses, and goes to jail for fifteen years in the hope of coming out to spend the rest of his life in the ease of wealth. When five years have made him long for freedom, he gets the chance to escape, takes it, burns his face with acid to alter his appearance, digs up his loot, only to be arrested, finding that the man who helped him escape was a government agent, and that now he has not only ruined his looks past all hope of repair, but faces the remainder of his term without the money at the end of it. The young villain, who finished the picture in a state of horribly burnt ugliness, didn't even have his name among the credits. His name was Robert Taylor, and he was making his first appearance in an M.G.M. picture!

The latest in the series, *What Price Safety*, exposes the gangster builder, who uses such bad materials that eventually the entire block collapses. (The M.G.M. set-builders staged a full-sized fall specially for this picture.) The hero is the young foreman who risks a gangster bullet to turn police informer. *His* name is Lionel Royce—a tough handsome of the Spencer Tracy school. Few people have heard of him yet; but in their more confiding moments M.G.M. admit that they are grooming him for stardom, and that if their hunch is right, it'll be the Robert Taylor story over again.

In yet a third, *Soak the Poor*, the lead was played by veteran character-star Leon Ames. That fact probably sums up the secret of *Crime Does Not Pay* success: a testing ground for youth, PLUS the technique of veterans. So far twelve in the series have been issued. Others are ready for release, or in production. Each one does a service to the American nation; gives a thrill to John Public wherever it is shown; is a training ground for stars and technicians of the future; and helps to fill the M.G.M. coffers. Few films can hope to do better than that!

"With a sufficient supply of nickels you can have a seven-course dinner at any Automat"

BEHIND THE SCREEN

Stephen Watts, Sunday Express Film Critic, is taken for a train-ride by John Grierson

THIS is a pleasant book* for train reading. Stephen Watts, film critic on London's *Sunday Express*, has had the bright idea of collecting expert views on the different phases of popular film production, and has certainly gone the simplest way about it. As Will Rogers might say, "I only know what I read in the book"—and what I gather is that Stephen Watts went to Sam Eckman of Metro-Goldwyn and told him what he wanted, and Sam Eckman said: "O.K., old boy, I'll collect them for you." And that's the way the book is. The M.G.M. personnel has done Mr. Watts proud. Stromberg writes on production, Cukor on direction, Frances Marion on scripts, Cedric Gibbons on art direction, Adrian on clothes, Bill Grady on casting, Jack Dawn on make-up, Lionel Barrymore on acting, Douglas Shearer on sound, and Sam Eckman himself on salesmanship. All the photographs, with perhaps an odd exception, are from Mr. Eckman's photographic department, and even the dedication is kept within the family. It is to Norma Shearer Thalberg.

All this makes for admirable simplicity. What with all the company diplomacy, no ripple disturbs the quiet waters of perfect isolation. M.G.M.'s wonder films supply every perfect example, M.G.M.'s method every perfect illustration. No one criticises anybody else, hardly anyone confesses to a flaw in the vast and perfect machine. I won't say the result is complacent, for it is remarkable with what humility most of the experts

* "Behind the Screen", edited by Stephen Watts (Barker, 8/6).

have discussed their work. But one gets the feeling that the great horizon of the screen is short-focussed, and that M.G.M.'s excellence can be a bit of a bore. At York, as my train rolled on, I ordered a double Zanuck.

These complaints made, let me say that Stromberg's account of the producer's role is the clearest and best I have read anywhere. He strikes a nice balance in his account of the producer's responsibility to finance on the one hand, and to his creative team on the other, and he goes to the root of the matter in the importance he places on the script. I wish that everyone would grasp this.

"To my mind, the greatest function of the producer is to guide and control the shape the script takes as the writer works on it. To be able to do that well is the greatest value of a good producer. He, the producer, may not be capable of writing a line himself. But he knows what effect he wants to produce, and to keep his film to that steady line is his mission. He is the mould into which his workers pour their ideas. His is the fixed shape of the finished film. What fits the mould may come in and welcome. But nothing else. I would sum up the equipment of the producer in three words—feeling, formula, showmanship."

The other way of saying this, of course, is that no film can be better than the character of its producer will allow, and it does not matter how brilliant the writers, directors and actors may be. But, as Stromberg points out, the producer has special duties which lie outside the consideration of his colleagues. "Remember that the producer has to make a film that the public will wish to see in numbers sufficient to bring the money back, and he must not indulge his fancies unduly at the risk of failing in this important responsibility. And he has more than the public to please. He has to clear two important hurdles—the exhibitor and the press, and the greatest obstacle is the exhibitor, who thinks he knows what the public wants. No matter how confident the producer may be that he can gauge audience reactions, he must make allowance for these people standing between him and the public. If crossed, they can vitally affect the fate of his film."

Stromberg's account of this cold-blooded responsibility will serve for all producers. Cukor's account of direction will not serve for all directors. He describes only his own personal method, and however pleasantly he points out his limitations, the chapter on direction is none the less only a partial glimpse of direction. Cukor, of course, relies more than most directors on his actors, and as a director of actors has few betters. He describes well the process by which he achieves sympathetic direction, and to what extent he allows his actors and actresses to introduce their own conceptions. Like the producer, he rightly says that the director is the mould into which his workers pour their ideas. But any careful study of the terms of direction would have had a very different director—say, Hitchcock—as a counterweight to Cukor. There is an art of direction in which the actors count rather less, and the unique creative powers of the medium rather more, than with Cukor. And my own sympathies would lie very definitely with Hitchcock.

Nevertheless, Cukor reads like the good craftsman he is, and I like particularly his passage on co-operation. "The art of direction is to hold a delicate balance between giving something to and taking something from, the people with whom he works. A director must never think of his work as a one-man job. I want to make not only the stars, but the assistant electrician feel that they are there to supply something to the composite whole of the picture that nobody else can supply."

At this point, to be blunt about it, the book toboggans. Frances Marion is either staggeringly slight on scenario writing, or scenario writing is a staggeringly slight affair these days in Hollywood, which, remembering Ben Hecht, is absurd. Here are some of Miss Marion's dicta, and I shall not bother to discuss them.

"What the spectator wants to see in a picture is fascinating people in action. And a character fascinates when he presents the qualities that the members of the typical audience would like to possess in themselves. It is imperative that he have certain long-approved traits. An amazing number of financially successful pictures offer a hero and heroine who markedly present some characteristic that has been regarded as admirable by generations of mankind. . . . . Weakness, mental, moral or physical, in hero or heroine, very rarely appeals to motion picture-goers, perhaps because they see too much of it in real life. Nor may the villain have more than temporary success in his scheming."

So, with a sweep of her pretty pen, go all the heroes of tragedy. And finally—is it naïvely, or complacently, or cynically, or sadly, or truly?—"few producers will welcome any radical departure from the types of plot that have proved to be money makers. Of course, the story made from these patterns must be given as much freshness and novelty as possible. Ancient plots, such, for example, as Cinderella, Rags to Riches, the Sacrifice Rewarded in the End, if done with likeable characters and any degree of freshness, can be depended upon to do well at the box office. The presentation of these old plots, if possible, should be timely: they should be tied up with some event, situation, character and affair that is of public interest."

After which, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that with a sufficient supply of nickels you can have a seven-course dinner at any Automat, and that you can learn to write screen stories by taking a course in same at the University of Southern California.

In one other chapter I was so interested that I have suggested to the Editor that he should reprint a section of it. It is Jack Dawn's description of the shadows he paints on human faces, the inlays with which he builds up new faces, and the oils with which he can transfigure a face. "When we want wrinkles, we cut them in. We follow nature itself in portraying the shape of a face, rather than merely contributing lines to the existing shape". Mr. Dawn sounds altogether frightening, and I am not sure any more how much of anybody I have seen on the screen belongs to the original. Is it possible that Clark Gable's ears are yet another of Mr. Dawn's masterpieces?

I am reminded, too, of what John Gilbert remarked when he saw Lon Chaney making up in agony with a white celluloid eye, for *East of Mandalay*. "I would sooner be an actor" said Gilbert. But, if we must have synthetic pictures, we might as well know how far this synthesis of faces can go. Their master mind is not, as I thought, Louis B. Mayer, nor even Frances Marion, with her Automat for screen writers, but this make-up man, who requires for the practice of his art "a knowledge of anatomy, sculpture and painting", and whose pet assistant he discovered in a bakery "modelling small figures for a window display".

I would like to drift on through the many essays of the book in this way, but I shall take a passing crack at the hopeful Mr. Stothart, and be done. He, poor man, in spite of these troubling thoughts of synthesis, believes that motion picture music is "developing a new group of composers of great dramatic music that in time may result in great classicists of the future. . . . From them will surely arise eventually a Beethoven". How this is to be achieved is described for us in his account of the music for *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

"I saw in the scope and magnitude of the story an opportunity for something new in music for the screen . . I drew on ancient ship chanties, music of old English carols, and other authentic sources, and used these as a pattern to weave together my musical narrative. A symphony orchestra of 100 pieces was employed. . .. One of the dramatic highlights of the film was the portion marking the departure of H.M.S. *Bounty* from Portsmouth Harbour . . . Impressionistic themes aided in giving pictorial reality to the harbour, the ships, and then an intensely dramatic arrangement of 'Rule Britannia' gave a climax in smashing crescendo . . . . Choruses, with old chanties such as 'Blow a man down' and 'What shall we do with a drunken sailor' [sic] were used with orchestration in the scenes where anchors were raised or winches manned. Music of the South Seas, with its dreary melodic phrases, and its steel guitars, and its unusual tom-tom effects, was woven into a modern treatment for the Tahitian sequences, some barbaric, some idyllic."

There is, in other words, a great deal in the book to consider, and, it may be, a great deal in the book to splutter with rage over. Take it light-heartedly, for it is done in the Roman fashion, reclining on a couch with small pieces of paper. You may even find it, as I did, the best reach-me-down in film books for many a day. It is easy, neither tight in the arm-pits nor exacting at the seat. A critical shower of rain would reveal it, of course, as another matter, but let that pass. There is only one special word I have to say to Mr. Watts. We will let him get by with it this time, but if he will take a tip from a veteran, he will never do it again. Once, as a young critic in New York, I got a lot of inside stuff from Paramount and concentrated on it as he has now concentrated on M.G.M. "Variety" took me round the houses, and very rightly. In a film critic, concentration is liable to be misunderstood, and is best avoided.

CARTOONS

To-day is the day of the picture. Cartoonists have long been important and useful to Society. The future promises them an even more decisive rôle, writes Isabel Simeral Johnson in this survey of cartoon history.

A CARTOON ON THE TEA-TAX, 1774. The caption reads:

A NEW METHOD OF MACARONY-MAKING AS PRACTISED IN BOSTON.

For the Custom House officer's landing the Tea
They Tarr'd him and Feathered him just as you see
And they Drench'd him so well both behind and before
That he begged for God's sake they would drench him no more.

CARTOONING, as we know it to-day, is an outgrowth of caricature. Cartooning is not caricature evolved to a higher plane. Rather, a division seems to have occurred at some time in the seventeenth century, and thereafter two simultaneous developments are apparent—*caricature*, or the distorted representation of an individual, and *cartooning*, which is the more or less distorted representation of issues, situations, and ideas. . . .

The earliest cartoonists revelled in personal caricature. Exaggerated drawings of an individual's deformities were hailed as the height of humour. The more malignantly cruel, the funnier the drawing was deemed to be. As Miss Repplier has said, "The unhallowed alliance between the cruelty that we hate and the humour that we prize is a psychological problem that frets the candid mind". But since the middle of the nineteenth century, cartoons, especially in America, have moved farther and farther away from personal caricature. The individual is rarely attacked to-day except as the sponsor or symbol of principles which the artist disapproves. Cartoons have grown subtle and intellectual.

From Holland the cartoon travelled with slight delay to England, where it found a congenial freedom, though even in England the royal family was never caricatured before the advent of the House of Hanover. William Hogarth (1697-1764), the first of England's eminent graphic satirists, arraigned the society of his time in *Mariage à la Mode*, *The Rake's Progress*, *The Harlot's Progress*, *Idleness and Industry*, *Gin Lane;* and lived to see the correction of some of the worst abuses which he attacked. William Hazlitt wrote of Hogarth: "His pictures are not imitations of still life, or mere transcripts of incidental scenes and customs, but powerful moral satire exposing vice and folly in their most ludicrous points of view and with a profound insight into the weak sides of character and manners. . . . His object is not so much 'to hold the mirror up to nature' as 'to show vice her own image' . . . Criticism has not done him justice but public opinion has".

AFTER HOGARTH

Two notable cartoonists followed Hogarth —Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) and James Gillray (1757-1815). Rowlandson was a very genius of social satire, but so gross in the treatment of his themes that his drawings become repellent. Gillray was England's first great political cartoonist. His task and delight it was to depict the contemporary Napoleon, who had come to seem the incarnation of indomitable glory, as after all only a swaggering guttersnipe, swollen with self-importance. He portrayed the victorious Emperor as a tiny, bumptious Gulliver strutting into the presence of a Brobdingnagian King George. Naturally a Liberal, Gillray was nevertheless driven by the excesses of the French Revolution into the Tory fold, and did much to build in England a cohesive public unity against Napoleon.

Of Gillray's Napoleonic series the most significant is *Napoleon in the Valley of Death*. The theme is taken from Bunyan's conception of Christian treading that grim path. Note in the background the figures of two

French generals, Junot and Dupont, and that of Charles XII of Sweden, all three implying dire warnings to the ambitious Corsican. Junot, who served with Napoleon in Italy and Egypt and conquered Lisbon, had been forced to evacuate Portugal the month before this cartoon appeared. Dupont, brilliantly successful at Friedland and Marengo, had met defeat early in the same year (1808). Charles XII, after successive victories in central Europe, had been defeated by Peter the Great (1709) and forced to flee to Turkey. The unrivalled genius of Gillray's work was marred in many instances by an extreme coarseness. This coarseness was not attributable to the times in which the artist lived, as was Hogarth's, but to a vulgarity that betrayed a mind wallowing in horrors, a coarseness malignant, frenzied, savage, obscene, half-insane—the symptoms of a mind which finally became incurably mad.

George Cruikshank (1792-1878) drew political cartoons, but only during his youth. His social satire soon turned to illustrations and the correction of abuses such as Dickens dramatised in his novels. The most familiar and perhaps the most influential of his drawings was a series called *The Bottle*, which was reproduced in many countries and at many times, serving as a temperance tract.

DOYLE AND THE FOUNDING OF PUNCH

John Doyle, whose political caricatures first appear about 1830, began the practice of presenting a likeness, a portrait, in every caricature. In these portrait caricatures, Doyle showed not only the well-known features of his subject but the characteristic pose and mannerisms. Ever since his day, cartoonists have followed this method to a greater or less extent. To him is attributed the creation of the *Punch* cartoon, usually a single figure, as his son, Richard, John Leech, and John Tenniel later developed it.

Punch, The London Charivari, was founded in 1841, and the day of the lithograph cartoon in England was over. John Doyle's son Richard, designed the cover of *Punch* as we know it now and contributed regularly to its pages until 1850, when, being an ardent Catholic, he withdrew because of the frequent use of anti-Papal material in the magazine.

The drawings of John Leech (1817-1864) first appeared in *Punch* in 1841 and continued thereafter until his death. He was probably the most loved of English satirists. With gentle kindliness he "satirised English cant and hypocrisy, poked fun at British provincial prejudices and weaknesses, accused his fellow countrymen of selfishness and pride". He was the intimate of Thackeray, of Shirley Brooks, and John Brown, and they esteemed him as one whose wit was all the more effective because it was seldom barbed and never cruel. His most famous political cartoon appeared at a critical time in the Crimean War (1853-1856) and was called *General Février Turned Traitor*. Earlier in the war Nicholas I had said that it made little difference what forces the English and French sent against his armies, because the Russians had two generals who could not be defeated —Generals January and February. In the early winter months of 1855, Nicholas died of a sudden attack of influenza. Almost at once the Leech cartoon appeared (*Punch*, March, 1855) showing "General Février" as a skeleton dressed in the uniform of a Russian general, laying his hand on the Czar, who lies prone in the falling snow.

SIR JOHN TENNIEL

To Americans the name of Sir John Tenniel may first recall his cruel cartoons of Lincoln in the early days of the Civil War. Tenniel tried to make amends at the time of Lincoln's assassination with drawings of Britannia mourning with Columbia over the dead President, but the memory of his attitude toward Lincoln and the Federal cause is not a happy one. His cartoons helped to excite British contempt for the awkward, ungainly master and the cause he led, and to embitter for many years the relationship between the two countries. Tenniel's best known cartoon is *Dropping the Pilot* (*Punch*, March, 1890), which will be remembered as showing the arrogant young Wilhelm II watching, over the side of the ship of state, the departure of the veteran Bismarck whom he has just dismissed from the chancellorship. The original drawing was given to Bismarck, who prized it greatly.

On the social side of the later period of English cartooning, stands the unique and incisive George du Maurier. During the period when his pencil was most active, Victorian England was given over to slavish admiration of "aesthetics" in art and literature, and to humble obsequiousness before the titled and "high born". Du Maurier's inimitable drawings laughed this cult out of existence.

IN FRANCE

No cartoonist of note appeared in France before the French Revolution. During certain periods before the advent of Napoleon and after his defeat much graphic satire was published, though in the interims of autocracy such demonstrations were of course sternly repressed. In this article it is possible to mention only a very few of the leading artists.

Charles Philipon, "the father of comic journalism", was an ardent republican who loathed the monarchy of Charles X and cartooned that king mercilessly. Charles had entered Paris in 1814, "in the luggage of the allies" and in 1824 succeeded his brother Louis XVIII. Most of Charles's policies were influenced if not dictated by the church, and many cartoons were directed against "Charles and his Jesuits". The revolution of 1830 placed the mild Louis Philippe, son of Philippe Egalité, Duc d'Orleans, as *roi citoyen* upon the uneasy throne. French idealism yearned, however, after republicanism.

The France of Louis Philippe was filled with vague, restless notions of popular rights and sovereignty, with thwarted desires and unsatisfied public needs. As always in times of discontent, cartoons were numerous and acrid. As his fond subjects declared, the citizen king was "nothing to boast of" in appearance. His fat and pendulous jowls, narrow forehead with small eyes close together, his toupet and whiskers, lent themselves admirably to the cartoonist's art. Philipon had founded in 1831 a short-lived magazine called *Caricature*, which was followed soon after its demise by *Charivari*, the "comic" magazine on which *Punch, the London Charivari*, was modelled. The doctrinaire Philipon gathered about him a group of "garret revolutionaries", of whom the greatest was Honoré Daumier. Their trenchant pencils made history.

In *Charivari*, Philipon sketched Louis Philippe with a pear for a head. The device struck the popular fancy and week after week he and his confrères rang the changes on that theme. "La Poire" appeared on billboards, in lithographs, everywhere that public attention might wander. Nearly every drawing which came from this group used the pear as a motif. Daumier was renowned for having "served up the pear with the greatest variety of sauces". Unwisely the government prosecuted Philipon for *lèse-majesté*. Haled into court he is said to have sat making four sketches—the first, a true drawing of the king. This he held up to the jury—"Gentlemen, this resembles the king. Do you condemn it?" The second sketch showed the toupet and whiskers "flowing together" and a vague outline of a pear suggesting itself. The third had the distinct shape of a pear, but still resembled the king, while the fourth was a drawing of an ordinary Burgundy pear. Holding up the fourth sketch, Philipon remarked blandly: "If you are consistent, gentlemen, you cannot acquit this sketch for it certainly resembles the other three". Philipon was fined nevertheless, and later Daumier was imprisoned on the same charge. Philipon and Daumier had their revenge, however. The "pear", with some later cartoons picturing Louis Philippe as Bluebeard about to murder his newest wife, "Constitution", and other drawings satirising the members of Louis's cabinet, literally laughed the *roi citoyen* off his throne.

Daumier, the greatest of the *Charivari* group, was at first a satirist of manners. He himself apparently hated his cartoons which the people loved. He served *Charivari* until his eyesight failed (1872) except during three years when he devoted himself to painting (1860-1863). Painting was the art he loved and for that he vainly sought public recognition. Only after his death was his greatness as a painter recognised. Daumier's cartoons of 1848, of the '50's and of the Commune, show clearly how difficult it was for him to rejoice over revolutions when he hated the inevitable excesses. When the Third Republic was established, this artist was of inestimable service to the new unstable government. He had lived through three monarchies, two republics, and an empire; his opinions were respected and influential; he was personally beloved. From day to day he pictured scenes which reminded the wavering citizens of what they had suffered under the empire and what they had to hope for under a republican regime.

There were other notable French cartoonists. Gavarni of this same period who in 1831 published his only noteworthy political cartoons in *La Mode*. Gavarni's technique was excellent, but as Ashbee remarked, "fine

(Cartoons—continued)

draughtsmanship wasted—on everlasting cuckoldry". He prostituted his great skill by picturing the roué's life as the only one worth living and ridiculed every virtue as bourgeois. Randon, Gill (who liked to pillory Gambetta), Forain of Dreyfus days, and others, played important roles, but further discussion of their work is not possible here.

IN HOLLAND

In this twentieth century no cartoonist has wielded so great an influence upon so many of his contemporaries and through them upon history, as the famous Hollander, Louis Raemaekers, during the World War. As a citizen of a neutral country and an eye-witness of the invasion of Belgium, he had authority. Most of his drawings appeared first in the Amsterdam *Telegraaf;* they are reproduced in every country on the globe. So bitter was the feeling in Germany toward Raemaekers, according to the English critic H. Perry Robinson, that a German newspaper, summarising the terms of peace which Germany would exact, declared that indemnity would be demanded for every one of Raemaekers' cartoons. The same authority relates that a Dutch sentry, stationed at Waals in Limburg where wire fencing marked the frontier through the main street of the town, heard from a German sentry that there was one man in Holland who, if the Dutch soldier could induce him to step across the line, would be worth 12,000 marks. That man was Raemaekers. One of the best known of Raemaekers' cartoons was called *The Adoration of the Magi* and showed Wilhelm II of Germany, Francis Joseph of Austria, and Mahommet VI of Turkey, bringing gifts to the new-born Saviour. This drawing, a superb example of satire, was evoked by the words of the Kaiser: "In these revolutionary times . . . the sole support and only protection of the Church are to be found in the Imperial hand and under the aegis of the German Empire."

IN THE UNITED STATES

The political cartoon has come into greater general use in the United States than in any other country. An English critic assures us smugly and truthfully that "The proverbial irreverence of the American mind toward even its most cherished personages and ideals has made it particularly responsive to the appeal of the caricature." We are extremists in America and the language of cartoons is for us a native tongue.

The earliest cartoons dealing with American problems or issues appeared in England, when the colonies were still under British rule. Most of these, oddly enough, show greater sympathy for the restless and rebellious colonists than for the monarch and Parliament—further evidence that the cartoon is essentially democratic.

Our first American cartoonist was Franklin—the shrewd, humour-loving politician who never permitted anger to cloud his vision or the spirit of revenge to embarrass his wisdom. The quarrels among the colonies had long distressed Franklin for he saw, more clearly than most, that the future depended upon unity. When the unhappy struggle between the colonists and the French for possession of the lands west of the Alleghenies was about to break out, Franklin, urging the colonies to unite against their common foe, published in his *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 9th, 1754, the famous snake cartoon. This wood block depicted a snake cut into eight pieces, this number of pieces presumably representing the colonial divisions then eligible to send delegates to the Albany Congress about to convene June 19th, 1754. The caption was "Join or Die". With slight variations this cartoon was used for many years in different journals and at various crises.

The early nineteenth century produced a few cartoonists, notably William Charles and Amos Doolittle. Charles, a Scotsman, had been forced to leave his own country and had come to the colonies, where he produced many drawings of the War of 1812, which was marked by an almost complete dearth of cartoons. Controversy is the cartoonist's staff of life; he starves in times of "brotherly love". After 1824 the flow of cartoons set in again, and never since that time, with the exception of an occasional slight coma, has the spirit of controversy, and with it the cartoon, failed to flourish in the political life of the United States.

In contrast to the slightly organised and tepid campaigns which had gone before, Jackson's political battles of 1828 and 1832 were vibrant with personal abuse, vituperation, and slander. Material abounded for the cartoonist. A veritable flood of cartoons accompanied Jackson's re-election in 1832. The crude, rugged frontier democrat was the delight of cartoonists, whatever their political creed. But three other figures in the entire history of American cartoons have stirred such extremes of affection, hatred, and scorn among cartoonists. The other three are Horace Greeley, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt. All were essentially individual, strongly-marked personalities with political creeds and methods clearly defined.

Left:
Vaughen Shoemaker: The Will o' the Wisp (Chicago Daily News)

Below:
By Honoré Daumier, 1871

(*Huntington Gallery*)

(*Huntington Gallery*)

CARTOONS ENTER THE PERIODICALS

The cartoons of Jackson's time and after were issued separately as engravings, later as lithographs. They were sold by local booksellers and posted in public places or passed from hand to hand. During the 1860's and '70's the cartoon in this separate form began to disappear. Cartoons then became an eagerly awaited feature of the illustrated magazines such as *Harper's Weekly*, *Frank Leslie's*, *Vanity Fair*, *Puck*, *Judge* and the *Wasp*. The giant of those days was Thomas Nast, a young German, who came to America as a child, returned to Europe to follow the fortunes of Garibaldi, and finally joined the staff of *Harper's Weekly*. His first great service to his adopted country occurred during the days of the Civil War when Lincoln called him "our best recruiting sergeant".

The most widely circulated of his cartoons in those years was the *Compromise Cartoon*. In 1864 McClellan, who had been relieved of his command as head of the Army of the Potomac, following a series of military disasters, ran for the Presidency on the Democratic ticket against his former commander-in-chief. The Democratic platform declared the war a failure and demanded an early peace of compromise. From Nast came this cartoon, which was reproduced by the hundreds of thousands as a campaign document.

Nast's most spectacular work, however, was connected with his renowned attack on the Tweed Ring in New York. About 1870, it will be recalled, four men controlled New York City as if it were their personal property. They were William Marcy Tweed, *alias* "Big Bill" or the "Boss"; Peter Barr Sweeney, "Brains" or "Pete"; Richard B. Connolly, "Slippery Dick"; and A. Oakey Hall, or "O.K. Haul" as Nast called him. This quartet of early racketeers looted the city treasury and preyed upon business of every kind, while enjoying a close alliance with Jay Gould and James Fisk. The *Times* and *Harper's Weekly* led an attack against them but the culprits worried little about editorials. Nast's barrage of cartoons proved to be another matter. "Let's stop them damned pictures", Tweed demanded, "I don't care so much what the papers write about me—my constituents can't read; but, damn it, they can see pictures!"

After the *Times* succeeded in getting hold of Connolly's private accounts, Tweed fled to Spain, where an illiterate Spaniard, who could nevertheless "see pictures", recognised him from a Nast cartoon and reported the presence of the "New York kidnapper" to the police. Tweed was arrested, sent back to New York, tried, and convicted. At long last the prison gates closed behind him. Nast had accomplished his purpose.

The defeat of Greeley for the Presidency in 1872 was in some part caused by Nast's cartoons. Justly or unjustly, Nast continuously linked the famous editor with the Tammany Rings. To Nast is attributed the use of the Elephant and Donkey as symbols of the two great political parties, although they had appeared occasionally as early as the 1830's. Modern cartoonists still use other symbols which were invented by Nast—the Square Cap of Labour, the Tammany Tiger, the Rag Baby of Inflation, the Full Dinner Pail. Nast's work has never been surpassed. Two advantages served his greatness. *Harper's* left him entirely free to draw whatever he wished, and he drew nothing that was not dictated by sincere personal conviction.

The tremendous success of Nast's work in *Harper's Weekly* led naturally to the founding of weekly magazines dedicated to illustration, caricature, and cartoon. Of these none was more successful than *Puck*, founded in St. Louis in 1870 by a young German, Joseph Keppler. Keppler was soon forced to abandon the original enterprise, but in 1873 he left for New York and there, three years later, September, 1876, the first German number, and in March, 1877, the first English number, of a new *Puck* appeared. Cartoons in the early numbers were in black and white and very crude, but Keppler soon learned to use colour successfully, and the fertile wits of the young German and his collaborators quickly built up a magazine which was eagerly awaited each week for its drawings, its pungent satire, its vigorous and humorous comment. Associated with Keppler were the two Gillams, Opper, Dalrymple, and others, all able artists. *Puck* reached the peak of its influence in the Presidential campaign of 1884, when James G. Blaine ran against Grover Cleveland. Keppler produced a series of cartoons against Blaine so devastating that they struck actual terror to the hearts of the candidate and his supporters, and not even the loyal allegiance of such papers as the *New York Tribune* under Whitelaw Reid could offset the impact of this gruelling attack.

The artists—sometimes Keppler himself, sometimes one of the Gillams—pictured the Republican candidate as the "Tattooed Man", his body covered with the tattooed evidence of his record in connection with the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad bonds, the Mulligan Letters and other irregular transactions of which he was accused. These cartoons form an indelible part of a campaign which for bitter vituperation has never been surpassed.

DAILY CARTOONS IN THE NEWSPAPERS

The subsequent decline of the influence of *Puck* resulted not only from the early death of Keppler but also from the fact that in this same campaign of 1884 the *New York World* began, in support of Cleveland, the first series of daily cartoons ever to appear in a newspaper. The first of the series were drawn by Walt McDougall, who set his standard in the famous *Belshazzar's Feast*, picturing Blaine, "the people's friend", dining with Gould, Fisk, Vanderbilt, Depew, and other capitalists of more or less unsavoury repute.

The cartoons of Homer Davenport depicted McKinley as the tool of the capitalist, and Mark Hanna, who was regularly decked out in a suit covered with dollar signs. It is probable that most of us who think back to Hanna and the '90's think in terms of a formidable-looking thug garbed in dollar-marked clothing. That recollection is Davenport's creation. The mass of cartoons which were drawn in the "Remember the Maine" spirit created in large measure the public feeling which forced a declaration of war against Spain.

Theodore Roosevelt brought a veritable spate of cartoons—acrid, humorous, sardonic, affectionate, contemptuous, glorifying. He evoked every type.

The cartoons of the period of the Great War carried the one message that public sentiment and public action must be unified to one end. How much influence cartoons may have had in defeating the entrance of America into the League of Nations and participation in a World Court, we have not yet enough perspective to judge.

To-day is the day of the picture. The public has neither time nor wish for the great editorials which formerly did so much to mould political history. The cartoonist, no longer just a commentator on the passing show, has become an editorial writer who produces a leading article in the form of a picture. At his best the contemporary cartoonist is an intellectual with something of the prophet, the philosopher, as well as the humourist, in his make-up. He is quick to gather ideas and to concentrate them into a form immediately transferable to the reader who runs.

An examination of the contemporary cartoons recently displayed at the Huntington Library (two examples of which are reproduced herewith) shows at once to what a high degree of dignity and power the art has won. Cartoonists have long been important and useful to society. The future promises them an even more decisive rôle, and an even greater responsibility.

Civilization Comes To Africa

Edmund Duffy (in the 'Baltimore Sun')

Article by courtesy of School of Public Affairs. Princeton University. U.S.A., from 'The Public Opinion Quarterly.'

NORTH SEA

In one of last winter's gales, an Aberdeen trawler had the misfortune to ship a big sea which half-filled her, put her radio out of action, shifted the coal in the bunkers and gave her a dangerous list. Her crew spent the next forty-eight hours in pumping out water and heaving coal overboard to get her on an even keel. Many other vessels were looking for her all this time, directed by coastal radio stations, but she passed through them and came back to shore.

I came across a report made by the captain to the owners, when I was looking for material for a film on ship-shore radio for the Post Office Film Unit. You would have liked their report, because it left everything out but the bare facts.

It appears that these things are always happening. Every time there's a spell of bad weather, there's always some fishing vessels caught in it. At best they're in a tough spot, and at worst they're very near Kingdom Come.

Often the coastal radio stations are working double shifts for days on end, trying to keep track of vessels in distress, while the poor fellows on board are suffering God knows what agonies; but so long as the ship gets back safely, they all forget it until the next time, and the rest of us hear nothing about it.

Anyway, it was decided that this incident, since we had an authentic record of it, should be reconstructed in film shape as a story-documentary of ship-shore radio service, for exhibition along with other Post Office films at the Scottish Exhibition.

★ ★ ★

Described by Harry Watt

Giving an account of what promises to be one of the year's best documentaries.

★ ★

I think we may say that the presentation of a real-life incident in narrative form is a new departure for documentary. We are accustomed to descriptive documentaries and travel-films, analytical and social documentaries, but the narrative documentary is a comparatively new thing. The film is real, in so far as it tells a story that really happened, and in fact often happens. At the same time, the film is artificial, because it is a reconstruction of the story.

The people are real fishermen, fisher girls, radio operators, but they are at the same time actors, for they have lines and actions to rehearse and perform. Again, the details of incident and dialogue are in a sense artificial, because they are supplied to the story, but also real, because they are constructed from observation of actuality, and written with the eye on the subject.

Perhaps you would be interested to hear how this project worked out on production. I imagine that you want most of all to know how we got on with the direction of real people called upon to act for the first time in their lives. Well, it was not easy. There are disadvantages which must be faced. People who have never performed have no idea of voice production (how could they have?) and are often unintelligible. Some of this unintelligibility was corrected in production, some of it was left in the film for the sake of colour. Also, as you might expect, a number of the cast were somewhat stiff, especially at the first attempts.

Against these factors, however, there are many advantages—real people look right. Their faces are right, their hair is right, their hands are right, their feet, their postures, the way they pick things up and lay them down. This also is to be expected. The radio men are the real thing, and their reality more than compensates for any deficiency in acting. Also, they are patient, willing to learn and anxious to please.

The women are less satisfactory than the men—partly because they generally have more "emotional" stuff to do, and partly because they are inclined to fuss about their appearance. Yet when we consider the awkward conditions—they must act in the street, in a net factory, in a grocer's shop, with small boys all around—we have to admit they do pretty well.

There isn't much point in going into detail about the actual shooting. It meant going out in a gale. Our gale over-acted all the time, ruined all the best shots with salt water, made everybody sick, and finally drove us back to port. We would have been much better to fake it.

The film attempts to show that courage and endurance are part of the daily life of the fishermen, in fact part of their stock-in-trade. This is one of those facts that everybody knows, and nobody realises, until some tragedy occurs.

I suppose it's inevitable that nobody should pay any attention to the dangers of the sea, or the courage of the seamen, until the vessels are sunk and the fishermen drowned. It works that way with the miners, too. They are heroes only when the roof falls in, which is silly. Why should a fisherman have to get drowned before anybody notices him? Why should the ship have to go down, before it becomes news? I suppose it comes to this, that we have got so accustomed to screaming headlines that we don't believe in danger, unless somebody can produce a dead body.

Anybody who goes to see *North Sea* expecting dead bodies will be disappointed. There is no wreck. In fact, come to think of it, the film is a most pedestrian affair; nobody gives his life for his friend, there's no melodrama, it's simply the story of men at work in a particularly dangerous job, and getting out of a particularly tight corner partly by luck (all sailors require luck) and partly by hard work. Of course, it's exciting—it couldn't be otherwise. It leads up to the most terrific ending. Guess what happens. Here are the men sweating blood for thirty-six hours at a stretch, and the skipper directing them and at the same time enduring the private agony of responsibility. And guess what happens—there is an ease-up in the weather, and the wireless gets going again, and everything is all right, and they make tea.

Well, as I said, if anybody expects them to be rescued at the last minute, by a liner or a battleship, or picked up by a submarine, the film will come as a great disappointment. The film is not about what *might* happen to North Sea trawlermen, but about what *does* happen to them, and that is this—when bad weather comes, they may get drowned, or take their chance in the boats, or get back. We have tried to show that the endurance and the courage of those who get back are not less than of those who don't. I believe we are all mixed up between courage and martyrdom, and fail to recognise the one, unless it results in the other, and I don't see why we should wait till people are dead before we give them a hand.

left: "One of last winter's gales." *Above: "The radio men are the real thing."*

"There is no excuse for the offensive"

(*"The Charge of the Light Brigade"*)

FOUR out of FIFTY

would have gone to war. A school debate on War, described by Thomas Baird

THE ribbon of concrete road stretched across the dark rich fields of Wisconsin. The last traces of winter snow still lay in the hollows. The car drew up alongside a little one-story red brick building. About a hundred yards further on was a growth of houses clustered round the cross-roads. On all sides the flat fields, with their shrivelled stocks of last year's corn, ran back to the far horizon.

Inside the school house a stove was burning, and a teacher talking to a bright-looking class. I stood at the side of the room admiring the wall pictures. There was a very good selection of photographs and some work by the children themselves. Then I saw it. It was hanging on the long wall opposite the main windows. The yellow sun was shining in on it. It was real enough. But how fantastic! Coming over these vast farm lands my head had swum in an effort to grasp the huge distance. My head swam again. I closed my eyes, then opened them quickly. It was still there.

It was a map of the world. But what a map. Right in the centre was Wisconsin, to the left was the Pacific and to the right, the Atlantic. Far to the right was Great Britain, and then Norway; far to the left was China, Australia and Russia. The world was cockeyed. The whole world had been twisted just to suit this little red school house in Wisconsin. But they had just as much right to twist it to suit them as I had to make London or Greenwich or Kensington the centre of the world. For them this little red school house *is* the centre of the world.

But I realised that the map in my red school house had given me a special cast of thought about the lay-out of the world: these children were getting another cast, just as powerful, just as wrong. One has only to think to realise how many attitudes are born and formed this way, many of them more important than our conception of a globe we shall probably never travel.

It was just when I was speculating on this theme—on our ready-made attitudes and on the attitudes we never acquire because our teachers cannot make them ready-made—that I visited a school in New York. I went in the company of Dr. Alice V. Keliher of the Human Relations Commission of the Progressive Education Association. Dr. Keliher and her Commission are trying to devise ways and means of discussing in the classroom those subjects which have never been taught because they have been conceived among the unteachables. They are difficult to formalise, and so they have not been taught. Dr. Keliher's material is the ordinary, everyday problems of individuals in their relations with other human individuals. There are not text books with solutions to all the problems of the relation of father and son, boy and boy, man and man, and man and girl. There are still fewer guides to the problems of the individual in his human relations with society. But Dr. Keliher doesn't want rules and ready-made guides to conduct: she wants children to discuss the problems at their own level and form their own attitudes. She uses many techniques, but perhaps the most interesting is her use of film. She has secured permission to re-edit theatrical films which contain a human relations problem. This she makes a case. She has re-edited *Fury*, *The Man I Killed*, the character of the mother from *Cavalcade*, the character of the conscientious objector from *Private Jones*, the young delinquent in *The Devil is a Sissy*, and many more.

The school class we visited was to see *The Man I Killed* (known in the U.S. as *Broken Melody*). With only a slight prior comment the re-cut film was shown. The story was cut down to the following situation :

> A sensitive young musician has been haunted by the face of a young German musician he killed during the war, who had not lifted a hand to defend himself, and was in the act of writing to his family when he died. The Frenchman is at the point of collapse, and goes to the church for help. He tells the priest that he has murdered a man, but when the priest has heard his confession, and realises that the man was killed in the trenches, he gives the musician absolution, telling him he had only done his duty.
>
> "Duty?" says the boy, "Duty? Duty to *kill?* Is this the only answer I can get in the house of God?" The priest can give him no comfort, but advises that the boy go to Germany, to the family of the soldier he killed, and try to seek their forgiveness.
>
> He goes to Germany, and seeks out the family of the dead German. The German father at first tries to turn him out of the house just because he is a Frenchman, and "millions of dead lie between us", but is interrupted by the dead boy's mother and fiancée who welcome the Frenchman, whom they have seen putting flowers on their boy's grave. They assume he has known the German in Paris, and he finds himself accepted in the family as a friend.
>
> The German father finds his beer-drinking companions in the town tavern wish to ostracise him because he is entertaining a hated Frenchman in his home, and the old man is roused

"They must realise what war is . . ."

("The Road Back," Universal) *"You just want to kill . . ."*

into making a stirring indictment against hate and war. "Who sent our boys out to die, and cheered them as they went?" he asks them. "We did: we the old men, who sit at home and nurse our hate and send our sons out to die for it."

After the film had been shown once these 16-year-old school children gathered round in a semi-circle and Dr. Keliher merely asked them what they thought about it all. The following is a verbatim account of the discussion:

BOY: I think that it certainly gave a vivid picture of what went on before and after the war. Perhaps one of the reasons for war is hatred of foreigners —French and German—they did not look at the other side.

BOY: It did not consider just the last war. It is just an example of any war, and how serious future wars might be.

GIRL: Mr. Taubeneck said that the last war was just a tea party compared to what the next war will be.

GIRL: I think this shows very much how people can be set up like mechanical instruments. They have no idea of what the people are like on the other side. It shows how much we need to know about people of other countries. We should have more contacts, and know them better.

GIRL: That boy just happened to be close to the person he killed and could see him. Usually in the war they have machine guns and can shoot as far as a mile, and do not see what happens. The majority are forced into the war, and don't know anything about what they are really doing, so they don't object to it.

BOY: What about the men who are at the front? They see the other fellows die, and might be hit themselves. They would feel it more than the fellow who was doing the killing from far back.

GIRL: You must see pictures like this and

"When people heard about the terrible things the Germans did . . ."
Scenes from the famous war film "All Quiet on the Western Front" (Universal)

Continuing 'Four out of Fifty'

"War is one thing and murder is another . . ." (*A.B.F.D.*)

read "Paths of Glory" to get how terrible war can be.

BOY: The person you are fighting is not always some wild, dumb beast. He is apt to have as much intelligence if not more than you. His father has done something you don't like, and your father has sent you out to fight.

GIRL: It (the picture) was so stirring. Anyone looking at it might think that war was thrilling. If they could be sent out to the battlefield they would see what war was like.

BOY: I don't think that the reaction of war is as strong as that. The Frenchman was sensitive. The average Frenchman and German would not have a bond between them. It would have less effect, because it is either he or I must die, and this would not have such a terrible mental effect on the person who committed the crime.

GIRL: Anyone close enough to realise what was happening—a man sent out to lay wires—would know he'd be lucky to get out alive. They must realise what war is.

BOY: The mental effect is worse than the physical. The physical does not drag out so long. You are apt to go insane. If this man had not gone to see the family, he would have gone completely batty.

GIRL: The average person feels badly when he kills, but if you are on the field and know that the Germans are killing you, it is not personal, you just want to kill. I think this was exaggerated in the movie.

BOY: Sometimes it might be a question as to who did the shooting. But when someone sees what he himself has done he will feel more effect.

BOY: War is a horrible thing. We should see what we can do to prevent it.

BOY: You can't prevent it.

BOY: In the fever of war time everyone catches it, and they are looked down on if they don't subscribe.

GIRL: It is human nature for people to fight, and I see no reason why it will stop. I don't believe in war, but we will have it. I don't believe it is entirely the munitions makers' fault—they are not the whole cause.

GIRL: If you try to make world peace, and decide not to have so many warships, another country might try to get you in trouble. To prepare for peace we should be ready for war.

BOY: The purpose of the picture is to show that a great many people in Germany and France did not understand the people in the opposite countries. Maybe the countries could get together a little bit more and thus help to prevent war by understanding each other's feelings better.

GIRL: The problem really has almost no solution. Now Germany is wanting her revenge. She wants her dominions back and she can't have them because they belong to England and France and they won't give them back to her. It seems to me there is no way to solve it. No country is going to give back what they have got. It is just hopeless.

BOY: Someone said a little while ago, that the way to preserve peace is to prepare for war. It is just such an attitude as this that keeps nations armed. We must correct this by education and teach people to understand one another. It is *not* hopeless. Improve the League of Nations and the World Court—teach people to understand one another.

BOY: Before the world war, did people talk about war in schools as they do now?

LEADER: No.

GIRL: People store up lots of energy that must be used for something. It has been proved that energy is put into arts, etc., and we know that energy must be used. Why can't we spend our energy in peaceful ways of education, how to spend our leisure, etc.?

BOY: If the people in different countries understood each other—this is not possible until the dictators are chased from the world. They do not know what is going on in the country. The dictators suppress speech. There won't be understanding as long as we have dictators.

GIRL: As long as any country needs to spread out, as Germany thinks she does, then even if we do get together and get peace-minded, she has got to get more property some way or other, and will fight.

GIRL: What if Germany and Europe go into war, why must we go in?

BOY: The President recently said that all the American citizens in Spain after a certain time, would not get any help from their country. If this would hold true in other countries and other circumstances, the country would keep out of war. It is just private interests in other countries that makes us get into war—munitions makers, the Ford company and other companies. There should be no protection for American citizens in a foreign country. This brings on war.

BOY: Someone said that it was absolutely necessary for Germany, Italy and Japan to expand. It is not true that they have to expand, because Mussolini says he must have an increasing population—more and more children—and then tells them Italy needs a place for their people.

BOY: There is a misunderstanding. Whenever people talk about war or going into war, they always place Germany on the other side to the U.S. You can't tell whether Germany will be on the other side in the next war. The last war is over and should be forgotten.

GIRL: The picture shows that if you knew the person you killed you would not kill them. If you can't speak foreign languages, how can you understand them?

GIRL: How did the doctor know that the young Frenchman was French?

BOY: When he was in the graveyard the girl saw him there and asked the grave digger about him and he said he was French, and she went home and told her mother.

GIRL: The priest really did soothe the young man because he so truly believed it was his duty. Mary Tudor believed she was doing the right thing when she chopped off people's heads.

GIRL: The picture showed the inability of the priest to satisfy the questions of this man. After all the priests and the church advocate that to go to war is all right, and in this picture it showed that the church advocates war.

GIRL: The priest told him he did not commit murder, that he had done his duty. Well, he did. He must protect himself. This is not considered murder when war is declared. They could not go to war and not kill. To the church murder is one thing and war is another.

BOY: In the first place, anyone who has ever been in the leading churches of to-day knows that the church never stood for war. What it does stand for is that every man must protect his own home, his children, wife and family. This is the manly thing to do. It is one's duty to one's family and one's God. They (the church) do not advocate war.

BOY: "Must protect your family and your country". This is a fine thing, but I think that all this stuff about "Americanism" and "Hail Hitler" is one of the big things that causes war. A man can stand by his country, but I don't think a country can ask a man to give up his life for it. If a person does not believe in war he should not go to war.

LEADER: How about this? What would happen?

MANY: He goes to jail.

GIRL: Their families get down on them if they don't go to war. They cheer them when they go.

GIRL: If you are married you don't have to go to war, do you?

BOY: I think it is pretty low of a person who has been born and brought up in a country and has been protected by American citizenship all his life. I think the least he could do is to go out and fight for his country and protect it with his life.

GIRL: When people heard about the terrible things which the Germans did they got worked up. The atrocity stories were not true, and there were some on the other side.

BOY: When Sherman rode from Atlanta to the sea what would you have done? Wouldn't you have protected your home, wouldn't you have gotten out and fought too? Don't you think people should fight to protect their own homes?

GIRL: It is all right when you are on the defensive, but there is no excuse for offensive.

BOY: "The best defence is an offence".

BOY: Why should a man when he has helped to build up his country try to tear it down by going to war?

GIRL: I think the mother and father of the German boy were natural. The father was inclined to be bitter because his son had been killed. I think the mother was very wise about it, and very human.

BOY: Perhaps because the mother had been home she was more concerned with the home, and the father had outside interests in business, perhaps his income was cut. Perhaps this would have something to do with his antagonism to the French. But the mother was concerned with the family rather than with countries.

BOY: It is typical. The average man feels this way about war. There is a great difference between the man and woman in this case. I think the man would not have acted this way, but the woman is O.K. The man's hatred was too deep.

GIRL: There are sentimental men and sentimental women. It depends.

GIRL: He felt it on his conscience because he had helped the war, and felt bitter, therefore. But the mother did not have any hand in it and thus was not so bitter.

GIRL: I think she felt just sorry about losing her son. I don't think any of them felt bitter towards everyone.

GIRL: Do you think he had the courage to tell the family that he had killed their son?

LEADER: What about the father saying his heart was with the young men now?

BOY: He changed because he wanted to show the young men the mistake the older men had made.

GIRL: He wanted to show the older men the mistakes they had made.

BOY: Something that impressed me was the obvious need for education and understanding between nations, because the realisation did not come to the young man who had killed the man until after he had done it—after the war. Education must be done before war takes place.

LEADER: How much understanding is there between American and Japanese, for instance?

BOY: There are Japanese teachers going through our schools to-day, 35–40 of them. It shows there is something going on.

GIRL: How do we know which way they are going to use that information?

BOY: How many boys in the group would have gone to the war rather than to prison?

Four Boys out of a Mixed Group of About Fifty Showed Hands.

LEADER: Have people gone to prison rather than to war?

VARIOUS VOICES: Eugene Debs, Bertrand Russell.

GIRL: My grandfather went to prison because he had three sons he would not send to war.

BOY: It seems to me that the intelligent people were those who did not go.

BOY: How do you figure that?

BOY: One of the big troubles with Europe to-day is that most of the intelligent young men were killed off in the war. Lots of the best men were killed in the war.

GIRL: Somebody said that intelligent people do not go to war. But the young people do not know. They would be called dumb for not going. Older people might go to prison because they could think it through, but not the young people.

One need hardly comment. More discussion of this type and fewer short cuts to knowledge like the map in my old school room or the one in that school house in Wisconsin, and there might be more wisdom.

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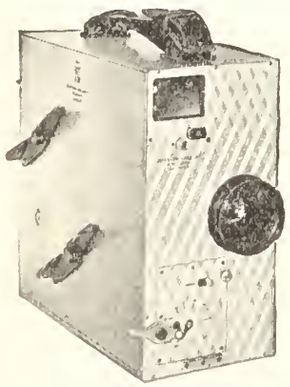

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(*Cameramen in the South Seas—Continued from page* 15)

Between them they have directed crowd scenes of a thousand people. They have sweated in the dark room loading magazines and developing tests. They have altered the script to local conditions—they have picked the cockroaches out of the pool of yellow grease that is supposed to be butter, and in the end they get the reward of faithful servants, they shoot the old pearler—and with it in the can, they get drunk to celebrate the last of the pearlers and the success of a Hollywood super. It is a romantic ending, it could almost fit the end of their film.

But alas! life is not like that.

DELAY IN ANSWERING YOUR CABLE DUE TO PRESS OF WORK IN RECENT REORGANISATION OF STUDIO – SENT DRAFT AMOUNT REQUESTED SAMARAI – YOUR FORMER PRODUCER BEFORE SAILING FOR EUROPE LAST WEEK REQUESTED ME TO NOTIFY YOU – HAVE REWRITTEN SCRIPT – DISREGARD PEARLING SEQUENCE – HAS BEEN SHOT AT CATALINA ISLAND – RETURN HOLLYWOOD AT ONCE – LEAVE SAMARAI FOR AUSTRALIA NEXT BOAT – SHOOT ATMOSPHERIC SCENES OF BATHING GIRLS IN SWIMMING TANK ABOARD LINER ALSO PICK UP FEW SHOTS SURFBOARD RIDING AT HONOLULU – I WANT THESE FOR NEW SEQUENCE IN PICTURE – A. B. KUSSKOFF.

And Shackleford says: "They'll finish it with mirrors and mermaids—they've tossed it to the dance directors."

* * * *

Two Lugs on a Lugger (Hutchinson, 12/6) is a good book on film making. Dromgold has a racy style of descriptive writing—his characters and dialogue are real and vivid, while Shackleford's stills which illustrate the book are excellent.

Top left: Piri Village. Above: Night Sky. (From "Two Lugs on a Lugger")

John Grierson reviews Laughton's latest film—'VESSEL OF WRATH'

Vessel of Wrath is the first offspring of the new Mayflower Company, the strongest and most promising of Britain's young production units. It has the financial backing of John Maxwell and the great Palaces of the A.B.C. circuit are yawning to receive it. Its cost of £80,000 is a challenge to the £150,000 spent so unhappily on British epics of the past. In personnel it represents an important new combination. The producer is Erich Pommer, veteran maestro of the classical German school of cinema and the most competent working producer in Britain to-day. Star and partner in the company's affairs is Charles Laughton, anxious to keep his talent under the British flag, and throwing himself with fury into the building of this new machine. "Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and no thanks for it, for two or three years," he wrote to me a few weeks ago.

For these, among other reasons, it is important that *Vessel of Wrath* should succeed. With British films in the doldrums a cloud no bigger than a man's hand is all we need to renew our spirit.

As every one must know now *Vessel of Wrath* is the Somerset Maugham story of the beachcomber in the South Seas who in drunkenness and debauch defies the reforming zeal of a couple of English missionaries and finishes off by marrying the female member of the godly pair and keeping a pub in Sussex. Laughton makes it a study of comic misbehaviour. There is great skill in his insolence and a nicely calculated vulgarity which is very near that gusto we have been missing so much in British films. Viewed as a comment not on missionaries, but on those wretched Women's Leagues of America who have been taking the corpuscles out of American films, Laughton's performance has a certain importance.

A little more of this sort of thing and the British cinema will be able to challenge the American on the simple ground of sophistication. No one will be more sensitive to the challenge than the Hollywood producer.

Like any first film from a new production unit, *Vessel of Wrath* is a problem child, and just because it is important one has to say so. *Henry VIII*, the epic of Royal bedsheets, produced no heirs male. This one may if its errors are realised and the Mayflower Unit's arrangements tightened up accordingly.

For one thing the film does not drive through to its ending. The last third is no resolution of the first two and the film fails in narrative power. I think I know why. Somewhere else in this issue Hunt Stromberg points to the fundamental necessity of having someone decide the mould of a film and see to it that all the participants fit their contribution into the mould. Here the mould has not dictated the part of the actors. They have spilled their business on and over and round about, with great generosity but a minimum of discipline.

In the first place for reasons of economy Pommer has acted as both producer and director—a silly thing to do as Pommer should know, better than anyone. Where the cold-blooded eye of the producer was wanted the warm appraising eye of the director has taken command. Director and actor have produced a similar undisciplined situation. Because presumably Laughton was partner in this new venture he has been given more than his due, and I know of no more fearful spectacle under the sun than an actor footloose.

I do not blame Laughton but Pommer. After all it is in the nature of a good actor to be the worst of critics. Especially when he is good, no one will ever convince him that a medium which like the film can do so much of his acting for him, is not stealing his personal thunder.

I like Laughton very much, for he is a brilliant fellow, but I like the future of British films even more. He will not mind, therefore, if I suggest an elementary lesson in the categories. The trouble with Laughton is that he is good at several very different things. He has skill in tragedy and has an ambition to play King Lear. He speaks rhetoric with a flair almost unique among modern actors, and though there may be mannerism in the way he slides across a full stop no one will forget his reading of the Bible in *Rembrandt*. He is, moreover, a dangerously good and upsetting showman in his capacity for lagging on a cue and exaggerating an acting trifle behind the back of his director. No scrum half ever played the blind side of a referee more knowingly. Add to these talents the equally various ones of being good at comedy and

quite brilliant in slapstick and you have a deadly mixture of virtues.

In any single film you can't possibly have the lot. Lear cannot possibly at the same time act the Fool, and Macbeth take his place among the porters. That precisely is what Laughton is forever doing. He does not understand economy, and by the mere process of being everything by starts and nothing long, is the greatest saboteur a film could have.

It may all come from his anxious desire to add everything of himself to the value of the film. But the damage is certain. Laughton one at a time would be the wonder of the day. Five at a time he is a producer's headache.

I have quarrelled a great deal with people over *Vessel of Wrath*. But I soon found we were quarrelling over very different things. I viewed it as principally slapstick and was prepared to forgive the odd departures into drama and sentiment. My arguers had viewed it as drama and were bewildered by the fact that it was mostly slapstick. See the film as, nearly, in the category of Laurel and Hardy, and you will see *Vessel of Wrath* at its best.

But this does not absolve Pommer and Laughton from making up their minds more decisively next time. Knowing Laughton a little, I think he should come through. A strategic retreat from his own talents is what is called for.

Stuart Legg reviews IN OLD CHICAGO and GOLDWYN FOLLIES

THIS film may be part leg-show, part cheap sensation, part hack-stuff. It may be superficial and smart-aleck at a thousand points. But let there be no mistake: behind all this a city is growing, even though it rival Corinth in wickedness. And for this reason alone *In Old Chicago* is the most important picture in town by a mile and Darryl F. Zanuck is to be congratulated (whether he likes it or no) on steering as near to civic education as his Hollywood upbringing will decently allow.

If the picture fails to be really big (apart from its £400,000 budget) it is because Zanuck has tackled an infernally difficult theme for the first time. Building a city may be epic, but it is epic in vastly different terms from the guns and horses and moustaches that conquered the prairie. Civic victory is won with paper weapons, fair debate and—oh, horrors—even thought. Small wonder that Zanuck takes refuge in convention and hitches the city to the O'Leary family wagon. The pard cannot be expected to change all his spots overnight.

The trouble with this method of interpreting a great community through half a dozen of its citizens is that every domestic gesture of the chosen few may or may not be symbolic of some public issue. It gets hard to draw the distinction. In the opening sequence Patrick O'Leary and his wagon (Symbols of the Old World), being determined to make Chicago before nightfall, yield to the temptation of racing a train (Symbol of the New). At full gallop the traces break, Patrick describes a graceful curve, falls flat on his belly and is given a pious burial. Has the Old World really died, or has a troublesome old Irishman been shot out of the script that the story may proceed? And when Widow O'Leary, having started a fire that killed several thousand and did £40,000,000 worth of damage (it cost Zanuck £200,000 to re-stage, so it must have been pretty good) has the face to stand up against the horizon and make a speech about a new and finer city, we may well ask who the hell she thinks she is anyway.

But these shortcomings are relatively trivial. The film is a great effort and a superbly well done job.

> The more I read the papers
> The less I comprehend
> Of the world and all its capers
> And how it all will end.

So sings Sam Goldwyn's master-crooner in Sam Goldwyn's latest most supercolossal all-Technicolour musical monsterpiece. And the question raised by the sweet tenor voice crying in the wilderness is an urgent one. We have had our musicals hot and peppy; we have had them languorous and lush; we have had them with all the regimented slickness of Hollywood at its most professional; we have had them with Busby Berkeley's staggering talents for regurgitating chorus girls from flowers, ships, chariots and cornucopiæ. But we have never had one quite like this. In something under two hours there pass across the screen the following strange delights: a portable zoo, a hunk from *Traviata*, a considerable portion of the city of Venice reconstructed, a ballet of the Romeo and Juliet death scene, an army of cats, a luscious west-coast bathing beach, a water-nymph ballet, a sound-stage complete with shooting outfit, a ventriloquist's doll, the Goldwyn Girls (various ensembles as advertised), enough washing to make Bermondsey on Monday afternoon look silly, an immense quantity of water from fountains, lagoons and enchanted pools, and a collection of living beings which leave the mouth agape with wonder at the achievements of Creation.

Elastic enough, you say, must be the framework that holds this fantastic agglomeration together. You are right. The only conceivable figure who could become involved in such a shindy is the good old movie-producer; and a movie-producer it is, in the shape of Menjou, who strives to conduct the lunatic symphony. Bitten is producer Menjou with the idea that pictures lack human simplicity. "Waggon-loads of poets and dramatists I have", he asserts, "but I can't buy Humanity". He succeeds in purchasing the commodity in the form of Andrea Leeds, a film struck cutie bearing a remarkable resemblance to Janet Gaynor. A Star is Born? No, Miss Humanity is born—but the formulæ are not dissimilar. Installed in Hollywood as taste-representative of America's 200 million moviegoers, Miss Humanity, expressing liberal doses of the milk of human kindness into every picture on the floor, becomes monarch of the studio.

The results (summarised above) are Humanity. And the definition, in one sense at least, is not unsound. Indeed, the film provides an excellent opportunity for a close analysis of screen anatomy. One sequence of Vera Zorina's lips, in the prolonged kissing of three Cossacks, clarifies in a flash what Freud has been trying for years to tell us about erogenous zones; in the opera we see the distressing effects of intense vocal effort on the sinews of the throat; on the bathing beach there are thighs to drive a sculptor crazy; and when it comes to Goldwyn's Girls the study is greatly facilitated by the placing of the camera a little below eye-level throughout a whole dance number.

But the purely anatomical can only be a brief stage in the whirlwind evolution of the musical. "How will it all end?" demands the plaintive crooner. We do not know, we cannot tell; but a month ago Sam Goldwyn made a significant statement. He said that he was not certain of the permanent drawing-power of the movies. He hinted that people might weary of them and prefer to spend the evening at home listening to the radio. Shrewd statement, Mr. Goldwyn.

"Bunch of frustrated people"

"Petrifies her leading men"

"Goes Innocently to Town"

C. A. Lejeune

Selects

The MONTH'S RELEASES

THE following list is suggested as the pick of the April releases, whether you want realism, romance, sentiment, or just plain slap-up action pictures.

Dead End

This is Goldwyn's reverential translation of the Broadway stage success, dealing with the lives of a bunch of frustrated people down by New York's East River. The story concerns an architect (Joel McCrea) who dreams of better things but never achieves them, a shopgirl (Sylvia Sidney) whose shoes are worn out with picketing, Baby-Face Martin (Humphrey Bogart), a local killer, who comes back after ten years to find his girl walking the streets, and his mother hating and disowning him, a bunch of toffs from the adjoining hotel, forced into this unsavoury area by building operations, and a crew of ragged boys of the streets, Baby-Face Martins in embryo, who live like wharf-rats, stealing and hiding, bullying and swimming.

The boys are the picture. They have been lugged across a continent to recreate in Hollywood the peculiar filth and frankness of the Manhattan tenements. Their language has been toned down for the microphones, but their faces tell unprintable things to the camera. They are the real stuff, and not even Mr. Goldwyn can glamourise them, past-master though he is in this peculiar art.

The film itself, except for two first-rate camera sequences, is more theatre than cinema. It is played in one vast tenement set, and suffers, at moments, from claustrophobia. There is no brilliant *coup de cinema*, like the barrel-organ climax of *Winterset*, to resolve and excite the final moments. But within these limits it is a remarkable film, hard-hitting and honest. The sound-track, separately recorded in Manhattan, carries all the bedlam of the East Side river-front. Bogart is Baby-Face Martin, Dillinger, Legs Diamond and all the rest—the composite Public Enemy. The small parts are alive. The scene frequently crawls with horror. *Dead End* is a précis of an urgent document, if not quite a first-rank film.

Marie Walewska

Marie Walewska is unique because it allows a leading man to out-act Garbo. As the Polish Countess Walewska, Napoleon's secret mistress and his ministering angel, Garbo stands deliberately back in the shadows and leaves Charles Boyer to take the spotlight. There is even one close-up that shows the full face of Boyer and the back of Garbo's neck. It's amazing. It's good, too, ensuring a *full* Garbo picture for the first time in fifteen years.

There is something about Garbo, like Medusa, that customarily petrifies her leading men. Up-to-date, to her great distress, she has petrified sixteen of them. Boyer, an actor of some experience both in his own country and America, has resolutely refused to be petrified. He has looked at his part and not at the star, found it good, found it, in fact, better than Garbo's, and gone at it hammer and tongs, the star standing by and encouraging. The result is a rich, moving, and well-balanced picture, a private life of Napoleon Bonaparte that carries him right through from the height of his triumphs in Poland to the final embarkation for St. Helena. Part fact, part fiction, this secret love-story is genuinely moving. You feel, which is the ultimate test of any good work of fiction, that if the thing isn't true, it certainly should have been.

Stand-In

There are no jokes about Hollywood as good as the jokes that Hollywood makes about itself. *Stand-in*, until the last romantic (and typically Hollywood) compromise, is one of the best of them.

The central thesis of the film is rich in satire. It presents the mathematical expert of a New York banking house (Leslie Howard) engaged in a statistical research into the methods of a failing film studio. Spectacles pushed high on nose, notebook in hand, this financial Mr. Deeds goes innocently to town. Tossing out such remarks as "Who is this Miss Temple? I've heard the name several times to-day. Oh, well, it's not important", he works conscientiously through the books, queries this and budgets that. Just as the film is getting to a high point of social comment, though, he spoils the whole show by falling in love with a professional stand-in (Joan Blondell).

The Awful Truth

The Awful Truth has just won for Leo McCarey the Academy award for the best direction of the year. McCarey, you'll remember, was responsible for *Ruggles of Red Gap*, *Make Way for To-Morrow*, and the early Marx Brothers pictures.

It is a light comedy, saved by a hair's breadth from the prevailing crazy manner, of the six months between the interlocutory decree and the final divorce in the lives of an otherwise ideally mated young couple.

Questions involved are such practical issues as the custody of the dog, the services of the common family lawyer, the choice of a new dancing partner, the division of property. Irene Dunne and Cary Grant discuss these problems until divorce seems, on the whole, more involved than marriage, and they reach an amicable settlement just on the deadline. Featured largely in the picture is one, Mr. Smith, alias Asta of *The Thin Man*, né Skippy the wire-haired fox terrier. Ralph Bellamy, tackling comedy for the first time as an oil man from Oklahama, supports Mr. Smith in the best of the fun.

Hopalong Rides Again

Paramount's *Hop-Along Cassidy* series has been built up on the rarish idea that westerns should have the same production quality as straight dramatic features.

All the Cassidy pictures are clean-cut, well-photographed, strong on the sound track.

". . . More involved than marriage"

Realism, Romance, Sentiment or Just Plain Slap-up Action

The supporting parts are cast with care, not just rustled up from anywhere. William Boyd as Hopalong, Russell Hayden as Lucky, and old George Hayes as Windy, are a leading trio well-known and well-liked by every schoolboy.

The story—does it matter?—is about a ranch foreman who drives his cattle through a dangerous pass and lures the rustlers from their mountain hide-out. There is gunplay, dynamite and hard-riding, and a blessed independence of background music. You have to go to the westerns these days to find action pounding out its own emotional score.

The Last Adventurers

Roy Kellino, the young British director of this trawling story, learnt his job in the studios as an operative and then as a first cameraman. His little picture—it runs about an hour and ten minutes—is rich in evidences of this training. His sea-stuff is grand. He knows how to compose a scene and adorn it; he has a sense both for bold mass and lyric fancy. *The Last Adventurers*, when it keeps well off Grimsby, is real film-stuff, finely handled. On shore it is tentative, over-refined and conventional. Niall MacGinnis, fisherman of *The Turn of the Tide* and *The Edge of the World*, is the perennially sea-going star.

Navy Blue and Gold

Navy Blue and Gold I recommend for one performance alone—James Stewart's. I take no responsibility for advocating the picture. It is a sentimental, ill-mannered and tiresomely patriotic piece, dealing with American football, and the other social graces acquired at Annapolis, America's Naval Training College, by the young persons who hope, in time, to become officers and gentlemen.

The heroes are three "buddies", one a nice little rich boy from a society home (Tom Brown), one a light-hearted slacker (Robert Young) and the third just a long gawky fireman from the regular Navy. (This is the Stewart part.)

Mr. Stewart is a thoroughly homely young man. He is too tall. His lower lip is too thick. His voice is slow and drawling. He has absolutely no glamour. I doubt if any producer in the world, even Mr. Goldwyn, could make an Adonis out of him. But as an actor he's good. Given a really sound part, he could be very good. Meanwhile he makes *Navy Blue and Gold* well worth trying, even for those who find the argot and traditions of Annapolis more foreign than Greek on the screen.

"Plain, Slap-up Action"

APRIL RELEASES

The Awful Truth (Columbia)
DIRECTOR: Leo McCarey
STARRING: Cary Grant
Irene Dunne

Marie Walewska (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Clarence Brown
STARRING: Greta Garbo
Charles Boyer

Navy Blue and Gold (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Sam Wood
STARRING: Robert Young
James Stewart
Lionel Barrymore

Rosalie (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Van Dyke
STARRING: Nelson Eddy
Eleanor Powell

That Certain Woman (Warner Bros.)
DIRECTOR: Edmund Goulding
STARRING: Bette Davis
Henry Fonda

Last Adventurers (Sound City)
DIRECTOR: Roy Kellino
STARRING: Niall McGinnis
Linden Travers

Dead-End (United Artists) * *
DIRECTOR: William Wyler
STARRING: Sylvia Sidney
Joel McCrea
Humphrey Bogart
Claire Trevor

Stand-in (United Artists) * *
DIRECTOR: Tay Garnett
STARRING: Leslie Howard
Joan Blondell
Humphrey Bogart
Alan Mowbray

Flight from Glory (R.K.O. Radio)
DIRECTOR: Lew Landers
STARRING: Chester Morris
Whitney Bourne

Angel (Paramount) *
DIRECTOR: Ernest Lubitsch
STARRING: Marlene Dietrich
Herbert Marshall
Melvyn Douglas

Hopalong Rides Again (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Leo Selander
STARRING: William Boyd
George Hayes

Second Honeymoon (20th Century Fox)
DIRECTOR: Walter Lang
STARRING: Loretta Young
Tyrone Power

Boss of Lonely Valley (Universal)
DIRECTOR: Ray Taylor
STARRING: Buck Jones

Smash and Grab (Universal)
DIRECTOR Tim Whelan
STARRING Jack Buchanan
Elsie Randolph

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by

H. E. BLYTH

Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs

(Walt Disney—R.K.O. Radio)

A friend once described Walt Disney as "a small town man who has read very little, seen very little, heard very little". This is important, for a knowledge of an artist's background leads to a better understanding of his work. Disney is a poet—a poet of simple things. Because of his background he is concerned with fantasy and not with reality, and so he works in a little world of make-believe that is all his own. Satire, though he has attempted it, is foreign to his nature, and nearly always has he kept free from the commercial influences that surround him.

Snow-White is a milestone in his career, and not only because of its length. Until it was made, death had never been mentioned in Disney's work, and since his little fairy world of fun and fantasy ignored all reality, cruelty and unkindness were unknown. He has toyed with the macabre before, but playfully and never with any real malevolence, and always has he avoided human figures and human emotions. *Snow-White* therefore is unique in many ways; here, for the first time, Disney has relegated his animals to the background, and here, for the first time, the shadow of human pain and suffering has fallen across his happy little people.

The small town poet has taken the fairy story written by the Brothers Grimm and has adapted it to his especial talents. He has modified the plot a little, has added songs, and given to both the animals of the forest and the seven dwarfs distinctive characteristics. Herein lies one of the secrets of Disney's skill; he always gives individuality to a group, whether it be a group of rabbits, birds or rats, so that one member of the crowd, by his distinctive antics, shall give us a personal interest in the whole. He has approached the story in the tradition of the Silly Symphonies rather than of the Mickey Mouse Cartoons, and in this he is surely right; we may glory in the riotous adventures of Donald and Mickey, for in them Disney can give full rein to his gloriously ingenious sense of comedy, but it is the Silly Symphonies, with their sweet and gentle fantasy, which have shown the poet to be a great artist as well as a great comedian. Thus the seven little dwarfs for all their engaging tricks and mannerisms, are the least acceptable characters in *Snow-White*, for they are not really of the pattern. Here, for a moment, the small town atmosphere creeps through, for Doc, Grumpy and Bashful are but a step removed from the stock figures of a middle-west community. Dopey, perhaps, is different, though even in him there is too much to remind us of the Hollywood small-town child.

Snow-White herself, the wicked queen and the fairy prince are a little colourless in character, and the animation is not quite right; but these are minor points, and, since perfection will come with experiment, they are faults which are not insidious. The queen, as a witch, is far better, showing the greater strength of the poet as he gets further away from reality.

It is the animals and birds of the forest who are wholly and entrancingly enchanting, and it is they who make of *Snow-White* an exquisite fantasy as well as an engaging tale. It is an integral part of Disney's genius that he seems to understand so perfectly the infant mind in animals; he can impart to their forms a soft, sweet roundness, to their movements a wonderful gentleness and to their whole outlook the unspoilt friendlines of Nature. His little creatures may behave as they never do in actual fact, but Disney does not draw caricatures; his little rabbits do only what little rabbits would do, if they could.

Much has been made of the Censors' refusal to grant this film a universal certificate. Almost unanimously their action has been condemned. This is extraordinary, for it seems incredible that so many intelligent critics should have so far forgotten their own childhood. The horrible vultures, brooding with sinister purpose over the witch; the old hag of a witch herself, with her foul concoctions, rendered so much more horrible by the skilful use of sound and colour; the skeleton in the case; the deep, sepulchral voice and hideous face of the spirit in the magic mirror—all these are horrors which a sensitive child would not easily forget. Yet it is hard to condemn them. In their way they are as good as anything in the film, for in them Disney has caught the true spirit of the macabre, and the macabre is almost a lost art on the screen now that the golden age of the German cinema is dead. For the first time Disney has shown us a glimpse of what he could do if he really wanted to frighten us.

The most important thing about *Snow-White* is the prospect it holds out for the future; good as it is, Disney's second full-length film should be infinitely better. That is why it is no exaggeration to hail it as a landmark in film history like *The Birth of a Nation* or the coming of sound. The possibilities of the future now seem boundless, and it is good to know that Disney is but a young man, still only on the threshold of his career. For a time, a year or so ago, it seemed as if he might not fulfil his early promise; inspiration was momentarily lacking, and signs of crudeness began to creep in. His older pictures, such as *Flowers And Trees*, *Lullaby Land*, and *Water Babies*, remained his best, until just recently when *The Old Mill*, and now *Snow-White*, have come to restore our confidence in his future.

We may envy those who have yet to see *Snow-White* for the great adventure that is in store for them, and yet still know that for ourselves the second, third and fourth visit will be as entrancing as the first.

—H. E. Blyth, *World Film News*.

W.F.N. Selection

Scarface	* * *
Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs	* * *
Of Human Hearts	*
Vessel of Wrath	*
In Old Chicago	*

Other films covered in this issue

The Goldwyn Follies

I'll Take Romance

You're a Sweetheart

The Rat

Second Honeymoon

Extase

La Mort du Cygne

Young Pushkin

Of Human Hearts

(Clarence Brown—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer). Walter Huston, Beulah Bondi, James Stewart.

In many ways this is an outstanding picture. Clarence Brown, who directed *Ah Wilderness*, has again grouped the characters, mean and admirable and half-and-half, of a small town, and drama comes from their bickerings and their loyalties, their littleness and their nobility. The new minister—a grand portrait by Walter Huston—with his wife (Beulah Bondi) and his son (Gene Reynolds, a new and good boy actor) come to town and meet their flock, the hymn-singing and dishonest

storekeeper, the doctor who likes his bottle, the fussy sisters, the deaf elder who leads the congregations in the wrong key. Huston's sincerity is terrific. Physically and morally he looms a giant over the lesser creatures. He throws the ribald out of his chapel, tames a wild horse, chastises his rebellious son. The first half of the drama is the conflict between father and son, with the mother, understanding and loving both, trying to bring about reconciliation. The second, with not so sure a hand, enlarges on the "benefits forgot" theme, showing the son's severing of home ties and his ambitious drive to success as a surgeon in the Civil War. And, beginning with Lincoln's lecture, one feels that the sentiment is laid on too thickly for anything but a "Mother's Day" poem. For that reason, I think, *Of Human Hearts* misses greatness, but is a real and moving picture.

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

There is so much that is excellent in *Of Human Hearts* it is a pity Clarence Brown has allowed it to nose-dive into not only sloppy, but incredible sentiment two-thirds of the way through, and has not had the courage to cut considerable footage for the quickened and sustained interest. The story is of a preacher who goes to an Ohio pioneering village with his young son and wife, gives all he has, but becomes the victim of meanness on the part of his small congregation, and fails to understand the spirited antagonism of his son towards the pettinesses of his environment. An outstanding quality in the story and its treatment is the very fine characterisation of father, mother, son, and one or two of the leading men in the small community. In this respect, Walter Huston draws a sincere picture of the preacher, a man who suffers innumerable affronts through his unshakable humility. One can believe in and understand the preacher the whole time.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

Critical Summary.

It is perhaps too much to hope that Clarence Brown will one day give us another "Ah, Wilderness", that little masterpiece of small town life which came as such an unexpected offering from Garbo's most illustrious director. "Of Human Hearts" has the same unmistakable touches of observation and attention to detail which mark the director with an understanding of life, as well as of the cinema, but it deals with more urgent matters than those with which Eugene O'Neill was concerned in his little comedy of recollection. "Ah, Wilderness" has recently been revived, and there are few pictures which are more worthy of a second visit.

Vessel of Wrath

(Erich Pommer—Mayflower Pictures.)
Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester, Robert Newton, Tyrone Guthrie.

Beside Charles Laughton, nine-tenths of the vaunted movie stars are not actors at all. Emil Jannings is, of course, a powerful exponent of character parts; but compare his recent performance as the debauched, resourceful reprobate in *Der Zerbrochene Krug* with Laughton's similar part in *Vessel of Wrath*. Where Jannings was heavy, crude, repetitive, exaggerated, and ultimately boring, Laughton is—beneath the hangover and the rolls of fat—subtle, light-witted, various. The drunken remittance-man of the Malay Archipelago was an ideal choice for his talents; his comic force is irresistible, he exudes character from every pore. Through the bloated and unappetising crust, intelligence and humour constantly glint; his pouchy lips quiver with disdain for the virtuous; his jaunty, disreputable gait gives us Ginger Ted to the life. The film follows Somerset Maugham's story fairly closely, and only

"Exudes character from every pore . . ."

comes to grief (as any sensible man could have foreseen) when it wanders off on its own. It slips along easily under Erich Pommer's neat direction; but every now and then we get a touch of that wilful extravagance which mars so many English films; immediately the Malay Archipelago vanishes, and in its place we see a group of English actors and actresses playing "Let's pretend" at Elstree.

—Peter Galway, *The New Statesmen and Nation*

The Cockney expedience of King of the River,
Skill of King Henry, the prodigal liver,
Flavour of Ruggles—the bank clerk, a touch of him,
Little of Rembrandt, but not very much of him.
Bligh of the Bounty—Nero of Rome,
Old Father Barrett who cherished his home.
Take of these elements all that is fusible.
Melt them all down in a pipkin or crucible,
Set them to simmer and take off the scum,
And Beachcomber Ted is the residuum.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary.

"Vessel of Wrath" has been skilfully adapted for the screen: that is to say that the short story by Somerset Maugham has been cleverly altered and expanded, its sting removed and broad humour added. For all this no one is to blame. The original story would not have been marketable on the screen, for Maugham's sharp tang of cynicism would not have appealed to the popular palate. As it is, the plot has been left with few subtleties but has become amusingly entertaining, and Charles Laughton, casting restraint to the winds, has made out of Ginger Ted a truly monumental drunk. The finish of the film has also an intriguing twist, but it is not the finish of the original story, with its memorable last line.

I'll Take Romance

(Edward Griffith—Columbia.)
Grace Moore, Melvyn Douglas, Helen Westley, Stuart Erwin.

In *I'll Take Romance* Miss Moore's voice is compelled to go it pretty much alone. This, of course, is no hardship for an audience, which finds its presence rewarded by her lilting singing of the gavotte from "Manon," the drinking song from "La Traviata," the duet from "Madame Butterfly," the pleasant title song by Oscar Hammerstein II and Ben Oakland. But in her own interests, she could have used a story, too. There may have been a thread of a plot in the Stephen Morehouse Avery yarn on which the script was based, but it is a thread stretched far beyond its tensile strength. When it snaps, which it does after the third reel or so, you can hear the report way up in the second balcony. After that, it is merely Miss Moore singing and Edward H. Griffith doing directorial nip-ups to keep the audience from suspecting that the story has gone with the wind. The fabric is light, bordered with whimsy, laced with some rather dull dialogue. Columbia deserves congratulations upon only one point: Miss Moore has not lost her voice.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

A young Buenos Aires merchant assigns himself the task of forcing a diva to fulfil her contract. Arriving in New York, he finds her unapproachable. So he plies her with expensive gifts, assumes disguises and she, finally intrigued, allows herself to be kidnapped. Miss Moore sings with her customary poise and walks through her part with a certain dental, kittenish charm. Helen Westley and Margaret Hamilton are around playing helpmeets to the singer and playing them well. The story is placid, frequently dull; the cues indicating Miss Moore is to sing again are usually welcome.

—*Stage*

Scarface

(Howard Hawks—United Artists.)
Paul Muni, George Raft, Boris Karloff, Ann Dvorak, Karen Morley.

It is good to see these old classics of the cinema revived. In the early thirties the new talking pictures may have been crude and raucous, with little understanding of the subtler uses for sound, but even when dialogue was at its wordiest, as in *The Front Page*, the effect could still be dynamic. Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur wrote *Scarface* and *The Front Page*—both of which are now being revived—and since these two were newspapermen together in Chicago, the authenticity of their material need not be doubted. *Scarface* was one of the first, and is still one of the best, of the gangster pictures, while *The Front Page* is, and always will be, the most memorable newspaper story ever filmed. Together they will provide historians of the future with a remarkable study of the times, for both are basically documentary, as indeed are so many of Hollywood's pictures of contemporary American life. Here, preserved for posterity in celluloid, is the spirit of criminal force and of corruption; and of a soulless, callous, heartless, sensation-seeking yellow press.

With memories of Paul Muni as Pasteur and Zola still fresh in the mind, it is a strange experience to find him here as "Scarface" Toni Camonte, the gangster whose vaunting ambition will stop at nothing, and whose inspiration is the Cook's sign which flashes out "The World Is Yours" in bright white lights outside his window. Vulgar, coarse and vain, he lives by the gun alone and his motto in killing is simple: "Do it first, do it yourself, and keep on doing it." A braggart and a bully in success; a cringing yellow rat in defeat. —H. E. Blyth, *World Film News*

Critical Summary.

On pages 8, 9, 11 we have attempted to show the true background to the gangster film, and to tell the real story of "Scarface". Those who are interested, and who are tempted to see the film again with this added knowledge, will find many interesting parallels between the fictional story of "Scarface" Toni Camonte and the real life story of "Scarface" Al Capone. In Big Louis Costillo they will discern the shadow of Big Jim Colosimo, Chicago's first gang lord; in Johnny Lovo they will find more than a hint of John Torrio, Colosimo's successor, although in the film "Scarface" kills Johnny, while Capone never murdered Torrio—he didn't have to, for Torrio quit. O'Hara, the florist whom George Raft bumps off, is, of course, O'Banion, and Boris Karloff, as head of the North Side gang, is a combination of "Bugs" Moran and Hymie Weiss. The St. Valentine's Day massacre is referred to, and the attack on the Hawthorne Hotel is more or less reconstructed, although the film probably does not do that famous assault justice. Capone, of course, did not have a sister, as in the film, but he had a brother, who was killed quite early on in the gang war. The "Scarface" of reality did not die in the manner of the film, but that he would have behaved as Muni did, slobbering and cringing with fear when faced with the guns by which he had lived, is a reasonable assumption, for this is how Capone is now behaving in his prison cell in Alcatraz.

You're a Sweetheart

(David Butler—Universal.)
Alice Faye, George Murphy.

Keeping my fingers crossed, I think we have found a new dancing team in pictures. George Murphy and Alice Faye are so brilliant in *You're a Sweetheart* that I venture to forecast they may one day rival Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Please let me explain before you begin to throw things. *You're a Sweetheart* is not a *Top Hat*, but neither was *Flying Down to Rio*, and this new picture is a likeable entertainment with lots of cleverness in its making and two most spectacular dances. George Murphy has not—yet—the personality of Fred Astaire, but when it comes to dancing he has and does deliver the goods. The plot is unimportant, but it has the merit of adding novelty to the overworked situation of a stage show threatened with closure because no one has paid for the scenery.

—Scton Margrave, *The Daily Mail*

This is elegantly staged, glitters like a new pin and gives Miss Faye every opportunity to look lovely, croon engagingly, and dance gracefully with Mr. Murphy, himself a remarkably good dancer with much of the Astaire wit and invention in his nimble footwork. The picture is of that elastic nature which permits the introduction of individual "turns" and an amusing musical trial-scene. Thus, with spectacular dance ensembles on the stage and a hard-working company to fill in the gaps, *You're a Sweetheart* is, on the whole, a lively improvisation on the backstage theme.

—Michael Orme, *The Sketch*

"Without which no film appears complete . . ."

In Old Chicago

(Henry King—20th Century-Fox.)

Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Alice Brady, Andy Devine.

A bold and colourful page from the life of a great city. Those early days of Chicago present as bawdy and lusty material for a screen spectacle as Hollywood has attempted to commandeer in a long time. And *In Old Chicago* is a noteworthy presentation of it. Not only has the miraculously entertaining Americana been collected with vigour and astuteness, but the weaving of it into a story of the O'Leary family and their fabulous cow has been accomplished with a fine sense of excitement and dramatic crescendo. The O'Learys, a mother and three boys, ride into Chicago in a covered wagon, and its story and theirs build handsomely to the mighty catastrophe. It is a concise, compact human drama of woolly days until a cow knocks over a lantern, then it is a spectacle of unbelievable terror. The fire is first a tiny lick of flame, then a burning barn, then a house, then a whole block, and then on and on until before our eyes is the horrifying scene of a great city in flames. It is a brilliant climax. The principal players are not much more intensified as characters than the hundreds of extras who make this picture of a city a living thing.

—*Stage*

In addition to the story there are some sentimental episodes, a few songs very agreeably sung by Miss Alice Faye, and several of those scenes of fisticuffs between lovers without which no film appears at present to be complete. But in spite of all this varied entertainment, accompanied by lavish reconstructions of architecture and costume, much of the story appears to be marking time before the grand pyrotechnic display which the audience is at every moment expecting. It would be pleasant to be able to yawn during this preposterous shindy, to be genuinely bored by this triumph of organisation and waste. But unhappily it is not possible: the noises alone are overwhelming, the accumulation of disastrous detail is really horrifying, and these infernal landscapes, photographed from every angle and even from high up in the air, form the most extraordinary compositions. The real fire can hardly have been more spectacular, and it is certainly one of the achievements of the cinema that millions should now be able to share the emotions of Nero.

—*The Times*

Troy was a bonfire, Rome a false alarm, compared with Mr. Darryl Zanuck's *In Old Chicago*. By some productional miracle, the film achieves the lusty, amoral quality of the original city, the city of prodigious growing pains, the infant Gargantua of the prairies, in spite of the Hays office—which is probably Art. Vulgar, ostentatious, squalid, exuberant, bawdy and delightful (to contemplate, at least). Mr. Zanuck's Chicago makes Carl Sandburg's metropolis of bohunks seem as literary and anæmic as the Hamptons.

—B.R.C., *The New York Times*

The Rat

(Jack Raymond—Imperator Film Productions.)
Anton Walbrook, Ruth Chatterton, Rene Ray, Hugh Miller.

Here's the slimiest creature that ever knifed a man in the kidneys while he was sipping a drugged absinthe in one of those fake "dives" they rig up for innocent visitors in Paris. Does he expiate his crimes in the end? No, sir, the guillotine is just a blunt razor blade as far as he's concerned. Anton Walbrook plays the title role, and he plays it so like his Prince Consort in *Victoria the Great*, I felt I ought to stand up and take off my hat every time he appeared on the screen. Seeing that no film star ever gives a bad performance, this dull bit of work must be put down to miscasting. So Herbert Wilcox gets the rap.

—Harris Deans, *The Sunday Graphic*

Ruth Chatterton, in *The Rat*, achieves at the very end some heights of nobility as a fashionable woman who loves an *apache*. Forced to seem tarnished, with a weakness for the types about the Place Pigalle, the fashionable lady is always majestic. The picture is something very British, though dealing with that fast, wicked capital of France, and no one is more British in it than Miss Chatterton, who was born in New York City.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Second Honeymoon

(Walter Lang—20th Century-Fox.)
Tyrone Power, Loretta Young, Marjorie Weaver.

There is a moment in this film which leaves the keen student of Hollywood's astonishing code of ethics in an ecstasy of appreciation. A husband is divorced and his wife has married another man. It is made obvious that the ex-husband and ex-wife are still in love, but that does not stop them from seeing each other as much as they can. The perfectly decent husband is made a figure of fun, and then—and this is the moment—the ex-husband and wife, after a lingering embrace, become sternly moral and self-sacrificing, and they solemnly remind each other that they have never before done anything which was not straightforward and above-board.

—*The Times*

This is one of the simple little things that they toss off in Hollywood while the million-dollar products are gestating. It is concerned, but oh, so lightly, with the essential rightness of first love, Miss Young and Mr. Power, after two years of married life in Switzerland, Naples, and that sweet little cottage at Juan les Pins, divorce, and fall in love again in, I think, Miami. The film is what kind, and of course, well-educated, people will call a-moral. Miss Young is luscious and sweet. Mr. Power, quite a man now, smokes a pipe, and squares up his slim shoulders under a leather wind-jacket. A final caption tells us that we have been watching, in a small part, a new beauty contest winner, Miss Marjorie Weaver. Quite a pretty girl, Miss Weaver. So what?

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

"Never Crude" (*Extase*)

Extase

(Gustav Machaty—Czechoslovakian)
Hedy Lamarr, Aribert Mog, Zvonimir Rogoz.

So much has been written about *Extase* and the Censor that there is some danger of its being ignored by the fastidious as just another smutty picture. That would be a pity. If not exactly a masterpiece, *Extase* is, eroticism apart, an uncommonly interesting bit of work, worth seeing for its lovely camera-work, the beauty of Hedy Lamarr and the fine acting of the actors, hitherto unknown to me, who play her husband and lover.

—George Campbell, *The Bystander*

Critical Summary.

This picture comes as an apt reminder to us all of the necessity of occasionally seeing films which have not that highly commercialised gloss which is now a commonplace of our screen entertainment. Hedy Lamarr's performance is not polished, but it is yet fresh and real and often lovely, and is one which could not possibly have come out of the sophisticated atmosphere of a Californian studio; indeed, had the theme been attempted in Hollywood, it would almost certainly have become an obscene and horrible thing. As it stands, it is merely a portrayal of passion in the spring of life, sometimes primitive, quite often monotonous, but never crude. Basically it is no more than the story which John Galsworthy told throughout several volumes—the story of Soames Forsyte and Irene.

La Mort du Cygne

(Jean Benoit-Lévy—French.)
Yvette Chauvire, Mia Slavenska, Janine Charrat.

La Mort Du Cygne is in the tradition of *Pépé Le Moko* and *Carnet de Bal;* not as dramatic as the one, nor as rich in humour and many-sided humanity as the other, but comparable for honesty of treatment, the magnificent integrity of the acting, and the skill of Jean Benoit-Lévy's direction. A story of sentiment is told without a trace of sentimentality. Not one player is guilty of those comic gags that have gained certain English (and American) comedians a terrific reputation, and ruined every film they've played in. No one in French films raises artificial eyebrows, or lifts one side of the moustaches a couple of inches with a comic bellow, or earns roars of laughter with an audible symptom of indigestion followed by a muttered wittieism such as "Curse those radishes!" The French are ingenuous enough to believe that people on the screen should behave like the people we know. *La Mort Du Cygne* is a tale of the ballet at the Paris Opera. Without haste and without surplus footage, the director introduces a whole gallery of characters all etched in economically with a master hand. See *La Mort Du Cygne* for yourself, and enjoy a film notable for subtle characterisation, flawless acting, and an extremely impressive performance by little Janine Charrat. To call Janine lovable would be like addressing a small tiger as "darling woffles"; but there is no doubt of her talent both as an actress and dancer.

—George Campbell, *The Bystander*

Young Pushkin

(Aready Naroditsky—Russian)
V. Litovsky, L. Paramof, V. Ivasheva, A. Ngebrof.

I have at last found an exception to the rule—for rule it still is—that artists are impossible heroes for fiction. The reason I advanced in the cases of *Rembrandt* and *Zola* is that the characteristic activity of an artist is invisible; or at any rate that it is not the hand alone which paints a picture, and that there is no known way of acting like a poet. The exception is *Young Pushkin*; by which might be meant either that this film succeeds where all others have failed or that it has not tried the impossible. I prefer the latter meaning, if only because it leaves the rule unviolated after all; the rule is an excellent thing to hold on to. V. Litovsky, who plays the boy Pushkin in this completely delightful narrative, does not act like a poet. He acts like a boy. It is his good fortune to be himself a very bewitching youth; but what is more to the point, he knows how to become Pushkin in his teens—for that it is the boy Pushkin before us, we never are tempted to doubt. Pushkin's desire is not to be a real poet; it is to be a good one, and we are convinced that he is just that. We are prepared, then, for the great scene of his reading in competition before the toothless Derzhavin, surviving laureate of the eighteenth century, who has been waiting to die until a new poet should arise in Russia. But this in turn is a reminder to say that the film abounds in superbly played old men as well as in perfectly directed adolescents. It is triumph of taste and wisdom.

—Mark Van Doren, *The Nation*

Written by

Stop Waggling your Ears at Mr. Taurog, Willie!

It appears that director Norman Taurog had no little difficulty in finding a lad with the right specification for the role of Tom Sawyer in the Selznick opus, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer."

Altogether 25,000 youths between the ages of ten and fourteen were interviewed; of these 40 per cent were eliminated as either too large or too small. Fifty per cent more failed on general appearance.

"At this stage," the studio publicity sheet tells us, "the survivors underwent close inspection on physical details alone. Ten major defects took a toll of 47% of those left. They were:

"Misshapen or extremely badly-spaced teeth, the largest single physical defect: 10% of the survivors lost out here.

"A short upper lip, which gave the child an unattractive smile, or otherwise marred facial expressions: this eliminated 3%.

"Eyes too close together, detracting from otherwise clean-cut appearance: 6% failed in that regard. Swarthy skin, lending a foreign touch: 1%. Hair-line too low to make finely-balanced face: 2%. Poor posture, flat chests, drooping shoulders: 5%. Defects in speech, such as stammering: 5%. Ears too large; not just big ears, but the kind which remind one instantly of sails: 4%. Oddly-shaped noses; too pug, crooked, etc.: 3%. Weak-appearing chins: 3%."

We can imagine many a disgruntled lad, who had failed on each of the above counts, taking a good gander at himself in the mirror, running a hand over his swarthy skin, checking up on his low hair-line and pinning back his protruding ears, and then asking himself how the heck that Mr. C*a*k G*b*e ever got past the examiners.

Interviewed in the De Luxe Pin-Table Saloon in Wardour-street, Snooks Grieser, *WFN*'s repulsive lift-boy, thrust a counterfeit coin into the machine and said: "Tell the boys not to be discouraged. My eyes are set close together, too, with the result that I can see as much through a keyhole as most people can through a window. Nor need protruding ears be a social handicap. In my cycling club they call me "Spinnaker" and I am a big help in all but head winds or sudden squalls."

And there we left him, whistling tunelessly through his badly-spaced teeth.

SAYINGS

"I always try not to be vulgar. But as soon as I try not to be, you all tell me off. What am I to do?"—*Gracie Fields.*

"These theatrical leaders of Fascism appeal to people as film stars."—*Mr. Attlee.*

Story Conference

HAT CHAT

Yes, we know the world is scrapping
Like a backyard full of cats,
And all Europe's dogs are yapping
Round John Bull's exquisite spats;
Yes, we know that our position's
Rather like a cornered rat's—
Still we love our politicians
For they wear *such* comic hats.

Comic hats in Westminster,
Isn't it a lark?
Comic hats for Downing Street
And strolling in Hyde Park.
What are Hit. and Musso at?—
Why, a fig for them—
Look at Neville's latest hat,
Isn't it a gem!

A member of our Consulate
Has just received a slap,
Administered, the papers state,
By some impulsive Jap.
At home we're building bombing planes
(And also bomb-proof flats)
While Britain's rulers ease our strains
By wearing comic hats.

Comic hats for doling out
Gifts to other nations,
Comic hats for strolling out
On their obligations.
Comic hats at question-time—
(Tony's was a dream!)
Comic hats in Westminster—
Isn't it a scream!
But there can't be any danger
Of aggression from a stranger
When our playful little statesmen
Wear their comic little hats.

PETS' CORNER

"Mother Finds Ferret in Baby's Cot."
—*Newspaper Headline.*

The ferret was later identified as a Mr. Jas. Ginsberg, talent-scout for *Punk Pictures Inc.*

"I was only trying to sign de bebby up on a long-toim contract," he sobbed on our correspondent's shoulder. "Dat Mr. Arliss can't go on for ever."

Our correspondent was later admitted to hospital suffering from bites in the neck.

"GOODNESS, MR. DISNEY! I ALWAYS THOUGHT MY GIRL-FRIENDS WERE SNOW WHITE TILL I SAW THEM UP AGAINST YOURS."

ORUM

ey Hobson

Get Yourself Guessing, Boys

In Boston, U.S.A., there is a beauty parlour where not only do women have packs of fresh peaches and strawberries all the year round but the boredom of hair-drying is alleviated by a cinematograph show. —*News Item.*

All we want now is a cinematograph show where the boredom of movie-going is alleviated by a little beauty treatment. You've *no* idea how coarse and greasy our complexion is, and just to lie back and have three inches of wet mud plastered over our faces during a Shirley Temple picture would be just too heavenly, wouldn't it, dears? Or maybe we could have it plastered over the Shirley Temple picture.

This problem of how to alleviate the monotony of the long hours we are forced to spend, through infectious diseases at home, in the cinema, is one that has been receiving serious thought from this department. Only yesterday, lounging in our fauteuil and idly peeling a grape with our soft white hands, we were turning the matter over in our minds, and you know enough about our mind to know how difficult it must be for anything to turn over in it at all.

Well, chicks, we finally hit upon just the thing to while away the leaden hours. It's a simple guessing game and can be played by one and all, dolls and guys alike, and all you have to do is to pull your hat down over your ears and guess what the performers in the picture are saying.

You will be surprised, or perhaps you won't, at the number of times you guess right. For instance, say the scene is a hospital corridor. A group of relatives and other beneficiaries under the will are gathered around the door of the operating-theatre. The door opens and the surgeon appears.

No need to tell you what he's going to say, hey? You can't hear him, but this is how it goes . . . "She's unconscious, folks, but we're doing all we can." And the fact that the director of the picture said exactly the same thing a few moments before doesn't matter—you've guessed aright.

Take another case. The simple little country girl, alone in the Big City, is seated on a divan in the penthouse of Dwight Durante, millionaire mortician and member of New York's upper crust. She is quietly thumbing through his album of holiday snaps, pausing now and then to take a pull at a bowl of Veuve Clicquot which he has placed at one of her maddeningly attractive elbows, when Dwight drops a diamond necklace into her shapely lap. She looks up in surprise, as if she thought it was a bit dropped off the chandelier, and turns to Dwight, who is being helped into something more comfortable by a Japanese valet, played by John Barrymore.

The girl claps the sparklers to her heart (she's only been in New York a week) and speaks . . .

This is where you stuff some more cotton wool in your ears and guess. This one's easy, too. You know she's going to say: "Ooh, but they're bewtiful! Are they . . . for me?" That's another one you've got right.

With a little practice you will guess right every time. The scene in the Technicolor oasis will present no difficulties ("Afraid of . . . me?" "No, of . . . myself."). Nor will the tense moment back-stage ("The show's gotta go on . . . get right out there and give 'em all you've got.") When you have achieved proficiency in this you will be ready to go on to the next game, which is to guess what the actors are *thinking* when they speak these lines.

This is not so easy. For instance, we have heard from a child prodigy that when she was lisping the lines, "Be kind to my Mummy, big mans," she was really thinking, "This is one hell of a good day to choose for breaking-in a new binder." It just shows, doesn't it?

THIS YEAR—NEXT YEAR?

"My dear, *have* you seen her in her latest gas-mask? She looks an absolute *fright*!"

"SO YOU CAN'T EAT BOMBS, EH? THE FELLOW WHO SAID THAT NEVER TRIED MY WIFE'S COOKING!"

PRIMITIVE INSTINCTS DEPARTMENT

When Rickmansworth people gathered in hundreds outside the district council offices and saw on the notice board that they had won their fight for Sunday cinemas, they shouted, danced in the streets, and threw their hats in the air.

So you see that, even under our veneer of civilisation, the age-old primitive instincts still smoulder. Even in Rickmansworth.

I well remember the scenes in my own little village of Much Dribbling when the first cinematograph show was held in a corner of the Squire's study. Whole oxen were roasted in the streets, whole families were stewed in the taverns and two gentlemen farmers were seen drinking nourishing stout out of a milk-maid's Wellington boot. A Mrs. Windlestraw was arrested for letting down her back hair in a built-up area.

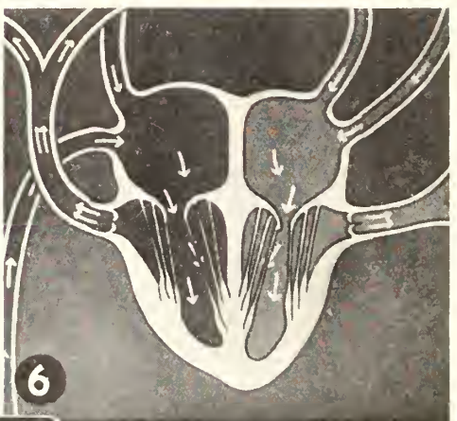
And I don't think many of my fellow-parishioners will forget the scathing indictment uttered next morning by our vicar, from the pulpit of the old parish church of St. Andrew's-and-All-Liver.

Ah, that takes me back a bit, as the financier said, when his favourite Black Maria came for him.

FOREIGN NEWS

Herr Hitler
Reminds me of a licensed vitler.

"Personally, Doris, I'd rather have stayed an usherette."



1 *Botany*
Roots
Life Cycle
How Plants Feed
Self Defence
Cabbage
Thistle
Seed Dispersal
Pollination

2 *Zoology*
Amœba
Paranecium
Hydra
Obelia
Coelenterata
Earthworm
Annelida
Tortoiseshell Butterfly
Blowfly
Heredity in Animals
Heredity in Man

3 *Embryology*
Sea Urchin
Frog
Development of Chick

4 *Ecology*
Marine Sand Animals
Animals of Rocky Shore
Interdependence of Pond Life
Moorlands
Woodlands
Downlands

5 *Elementary Biology*
Echinus
Tadpole

6 *Hygiene*
Breathing
Blood
Circulation

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'NO GEN'L'MEN'

says Mae West of her Radio Sponsors who crumpled up in face of the nation-wide protest which followed her Radio sketch "ADAM and EVE."

By Glen Norris

SNAKE: *That's the forbidden tree.*
EVE (MAE WEST): *Oh, don't be technical. Answer me this—my palpitatin' python—would you like to have this whole paradise to yourself?*
SNAKE: *Certainly.*
EVE: *O.K., then pick me a handful of fruit—Adam and I'll eat it—and the Garden of Eden is all yours. What d'ya say?*
SNAKE: *Ssssssounds all right . . . but it's forbidden fruit.*
EVE: *Listen, what are you—my friend in the grass, or a snake in the grass?*
SNAKE: *But forbidden fruit!*
EVE: *Are you a snake—or are you a mouse?*
SNAKE: *I'll – I'll do it.* (*Hissing laugh.*)
EVE: *Now you're talking. Here—right in between those pickets.*
SNAKE: *I'm – I'm stuck!*
EVE: *Oh! shake your hips. There, there now, you're through.*
SNAKE: *I shouldn't be doing this.*
EVE: *Yeh! But you're doing it all right now. Get me a big one . . . I feel like doin' a big apple!*
SNAKE: *Here you are, Mrs. Eve.*
EVE: *Mmmm—oh, I see—huh—nice goin', swivel hips.*
SNAKE: *Wait a minute. It won't work. Adam'll never eat that forbidden apple.*
EVE: *Oh, yes he will—when I'm through with it.*
SNAKE: *Nonsense—he won't.*
EVE: *He will if I feed it to him like women are gonna feed men for the rest of time.*
SNAKE: *What's that?*
EVE: *The original applesauce!!*

THAT, and much more like it was heard by millions of American listeners a few weeks ago, when they tuned in to Mae West's comeback in a radio advertising programme after four years of sticking to films. The West burlesque of the Garden of Eden had been produced by one of the largest advertising agents in the U.S. to plug one of America's best known brands of coffee. It was broadcast from a chain of stations of the National Broadcasting Company. If there were any American showmen listening, they would have said that it was just another example of Mae West's art, which in the show business slang is called "umph". There has never been the slightest doubt that "umph" makes money. In 1936, Mae West's earnings were reported by the U.S. Treasury as £64,600. Since she burst on a somewhat startled world in *I'm No Angel*, her "umph" has caused just enough trouble to make profit building headlines. But this time the boot was on the other foot: for after the Mae West *Adam and Eve* came the most terrific kick-back from listeners in the history of American radio.

Within a few minutes of the end of the broadcast, phone bells began ringing angrily in the offices of the makers of the coffee, the producers of the programme, the N.B.C. For days, furious messages continued to pour in. Far from boosting coffee sales, many old customers of the particular brand threatened to change to another. *Time* reported the rumpus as follows: "The National Legion of Decency threatened to transfer its attention from films to radio, start a clean-up. 'Bad taste', mourned the *Motion Picture Daily*. Such terms as 'profane', 'filthy', 'obscene', 'vomitous', burst from such varied commentators as the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper, the Battle Creek Federation of Women's Clubs, New York's Congressman O'Toole, churches, and plain citizens in their thousands. The Head of Washington's Catholic University's Department of Religion was hopping mad. N.B.C. and advertising officials, thoroughly alarmed, hastened to placate him with an apology, announced publicly that they would *never* do it again."

But within a few hours more, an even sharper sword was being brandished over the heads of all concerned. After it too had received thousands of complaints, the Government Federal Communications Commission was demanding to hear the programme by means of the electrical records that had been made, to see copies of all the contracts involved, to know all the stations which had carried the broadcast. And no one dared deny the F.C.C., for it is the supreme authority of America's ether, with theoretical power to close down any station, by cancelling or refusing to renew its transmission licence.

Hence the virtual dictator of American radio is F.C.C. Chairman Frank McNinch. Within a week or two he posted a letter to the Chairman of the National Broadcasting Company on the subject of the Mae West Broadcast. That letter makes history as the first official government definition of what a broadcaster may or may not do.

EXTRACTS: "The admittedly objectionable character of these features is, in our opinion, attributable to the lack of a proper conception of the high standards required for a broadcast programme intended for reception in the homes, schools, automobiles, religious, social and economic institutions, as well as clubs, hotels, trains and other places, reaching in the aggregate a much larger number of people daily than any other means of communication, and carrying its message to men, women and children of all ages.

"A clear recognition of the social, civil and moral responsibility for the effect upon listeners of all classes and ages, requires such a high standard for programmes as would insure against features that are suggestive, vulgar, immoral, or of such other character as may be offensive to the great mass of right thinking, clean minded American citizens.

"In our present system, and the statute under which the Federal Communications Commission functions, the Commission has no power of censorship, but this power and responsibility rests squarely and unavoidably on the licensee. . . . Licences are granted without any compensation by the licensee to the Government and solely for the purpose of serving the public interest, and hence the broadcaster must accept . . . a definite, inescapable and high public trust in the use of the facilities licensed. . . .

"The Commission has decided to take no further action at this time. . . . However, upon application for renewal of the licences of the stations carrying this broadcast, the Commission will take into consideration this incident, along with all other evidence tending to show whether or not a particular licensee has conducted his station in the public interest."

Most American radiomen seem to regard this letter as a serious slap in the face. "Here, in black and white," they are reported as saying in *Time*, "it is laid down that radio is *not* to be given the same freedom as the press." For the press, in order to preserve freedom of expression, freedom of artistic taste, and freedom of information to all minorities, however wrong thinking they may be, is permitted to be vulgar, to be just as offensive as it likes to Mr. McNinch's "right thinking people". But radio, according to Mr. McNinch, may only transmit views and tastes agreeable to *one* group: only his "right thinking people". From now on, radiomen will have to censor themselves, observe a special set of taboos, never take a risk on being anything but too conservative. They have been served as good as official notice, that rivalling the press is no part of their job.

The sting in the tail of Mr. McNinch's letter may yet strike down some station when license renewal time comes round; but meanwhile the last word is with Mae West. In her Hollywood dressing room: of the N.B.C. and the advertisers she said: "They were no gen'l'men—they let a lady down!"

facts like these tip the balance in favour of

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"NOT B——Y LIKELY"

THE filming of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* has begun and Eliza Doolittle will soon be showing us that a Cockney girl can talk like a "lady" in twelve easy lessons. Whatever surprise such an idea might have occasioned when it was first expounded on the stage, to-day it will seem a little old fashioned. All around us to-day we see good Cockneys being taught to speak like "ladies" and "gentlemen". And we don't like it any more: it is no longer funny, it is no longer thought progressive by any but hidebound educational flunkeys who worship not life but form.

We have to thank two modern institutions for awakening us to the sad state of our native tongue—Radio and the Talkies. The American Talkies have brought us bang up against the contrast between the living, colourful, vigorous speech of the States and that which passes among us for "educated" speech in our own country, and which gets to sound more and more like the utterances of a constipated rabbit. The B.B.C. have forced on us, too, some realisation of the menace of the public school whine to good, colloquial, lively and homely speech.

It is striking that our most popular screen, radio and music-hall stars are dialecters, whose supposedly local appeal has brought them a nation-wide audience. Max Miller, who carried the cockiness and the cheerful aggressiveness of the Cockney into the awesome regalia of the Command Performance and scored triumphantly; George Formby, who has bested bad screen material to become Britain's second box-office champion; Gordon Harker whose "Blimme!" and "Gord Luv a Duck!" bring something like cheers from an East End audience; Will Fyffe, immortaliser of the Glasgow working man; Gracie Fields of Lancashire; and even Jessie Matthews, whose mannerisms and speech are—in spite of an overlay of assiduous cultivation—essentially those of the Cockney.

Whilst dialect remains the essential speech of the North and the Midlands, London and surrounding areas are slowly losing their own speech-sounds and forms. In London, School and Radio force Cockney to give some ground, but occupational changes have an even more devastating effect. Children resist the efforts of the schoolmaster to cultivate their speech, but when the young boy or girl goes into a shop or into commercial life they are subject to the combined pressure of snobbery and environment. They are encouraged to ape the speech of the classes above them socially: they become "refaned" and their speech as thin as the modern beer brew. We might resent being called a nation of shopkeepers, but we are beginning to sound perilously like a nation of Kensington shop-walkers.

Mr. William Matthews has struck a learned and a vigorous blow for London speech in his book *Cockney Past and Present* (Routledge, 10*s.* 6*d.*). He not only gives Cockney the antiquity beloved of the philologist: he also shows us the speech in its true background as part of the life, work and play of London's people.

Most interesting is his treatment of the London Music-Hall as the essentially Cockney product. The Cockney, he declares, expressed himself most fully in the old music-hall, and its songs became inextricably woven into the texture of London speech.

Mr. Matthews traces the Music Hall from its earliest forms: from the old cellar shows and supper-room concerts, and the variety shows given at radical London's meeting place, the Old Rotunda Rooms; and the Grapes, Southwark, afterwards the Surrey Music Hall; through to the first music-hall, the Canterbury, opened in 1848; on to the boom days when there were some thirty or forty halls in London alone. Most impressive is the fact revealed in his account that the talent which made these music-halls supreme in the world of London entertainment was drawn mainly from the Cockneys. Actors from the legitimate stage, singers from the opera, artists of the old cellar and supper-room shows; these were insufficient to meet the needs of the growing number of halls; by competitions and "amateur nights" the talents of the poor were given opportunity to shine, and shine they did with a brilliance that still dazzles those whose memories reach back to the hey-day of music-hall.

It was inevitable that the supreme character study of these artists should be that of the Londoner himself. From the "Great Vance", through to Arthur Lloyd, to Albert Chevalier, Marie Lloyd, and Gus Elen—to name a few—the greatest triumphs were in representing the types of London life, faithfully and accurately. In showing the development of London speech, Mr. Matthews quotes many of the old music-hall songs. One of Gus Elen's most renowned was "The Golden Dustman". Gus Elen, who still wets a few eyes at occasional performances, was born in Pimlico, and came to the halls by way of singing in public houses. In appearance, build, speech, and mannerisms, he was closest to the Cockney type. Here is a verse of his song about the dustman.

Me and old Bill Smiff's bin Dust 'oys,
Allus work'd the same old rahnd;
Strange to say, we've struck a Klondyke,
And we've shar'd the welf we fahnd.
'Ow it 'appen'd, there's a miser,
Ud never let us shift 'is dust,
A Toosday night 'e died, and Wensday
Like two burglars in we bust;
Gets to work, and bless yer eyesight,
Oh, such welf yer never saw,
Apeneys, fardens, Lor, in fousands!
And to fink that last week I was poor!

Chorus

But nah I'm goin' to be a reg'lar toff,
A-ridin' in my carriage and a pair,
A top 'at on me 'ead and fevvers in my bed,
And call me-self the Dook o' Barnit Fair;
As-ter-ry-my-can rahnd the bottom o' my coat,
A Piccadilly winder in my eye;
Oh, fancy all the Dustmen a-shoutin' in my yer,
"Leave us in yer will before yer die."

Mr. Mathew's conclusions are :

"That the Cockney dialect will not long survive the common London music-hall, the costermonger's barrow, and the street-game. . . . Unlike the films the music-halls expressed the spirit of a great people; the costermonger's barrow compelled the Cockney housewife to use judgment, not merely to read the name on the packet; and the street game stimulated the Cockney urchin's imagination to a degree that the schoolmaster's exercises in self-expression have never attained."

Change is slow, even in the metropolis; most of London's manual workers still speak Cockney, and so do their children. The damage is not yet irreparable.

The job of commentary, in radio and in film, is to use the living, changing, turbulent stream of imagery that is the speech of the people, not to decry it, nor to strait-jacket it nor to aid its destruction.

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.

BIRCHINGTON: Ritz	April 4, 3 days
DOWNHAM MARKET: Regent	April 7, 3 days
HARPURHEY: Princes	April 18, 3 days
HAWARTH: Bronte	April 28, 3 days
HEYWOOD: Picturedrome	April 25, 3 days
HOLYHEAD: Hippodrome	April 11, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Homer	April 21, 3 days
NORTH SEATON: Hippodrome	April 7, 3 days
SOUTHPORT: Queens	April 7, 3 days

Colourful Cairo (Travelogue).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

DARFIELD: Empire	April 28, 3 days
DUBLIN: Princess	April 25, 4 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw

HOLYHEAD: Hippodrome	April 11, 3 days
PORTADOWN: Picture House	April 4, 3 days
SLIGO: Gaiety	April 28, 3 days
THURLES: Cinema	April 17, 4 days
CASHEL: Cinema	April 17, 4 days
SWALWELL: Cosy	April 7, 3 days

Islands of the Bounty.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

BALLINA: Astoria	April 16, 1 day
CARNFORTH: Roxy	April 15, 2 days
DENTON: Palace	April 28, 3 days
DUBLIN: Sandford	April 24, 3 days
HORSFORTH: Imperial	April 11, 3 days
HOUGHTON: Coliseum	April 21, 3 days
NEWBURGH: Public Hall	April 2, 1 day
NEWTON: Metro	April 18, 3 days
NORTH SEATON: Hippodrome	April 7, 3 days
RHYL: Odeon	April 11, 6 days
SOUTHPORT: Queens	April 25, 3 days
WITTON PARK: Kinema	April 22, 2 days

Insect Oddities (A nature study).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BATH: News Theatre	April 18, 3 days
HYTHE: Grove	April 4, 3 days
SKIPTON: Odeon	April 21, 3 days
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA: Kursaal	April 7, 3 days

Lancashire Lakeland (Scenic beauties of Lakeland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CAMBERLEY, Arcade	April 11, 3 days
DERBY: Hippodrome	April 11, 6 days
FARNHAM: Regal	April 25, 3 days
FOLKESTONE: Astoria	April 25, 6 days
FINCHLEY: New Bohemia	April 25, 6 days
FARNBOROUGH: Scala	April 4, 3 days
HYTHE: Grove	April 14, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Strand	April 14, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Piccadilly	April 14, 3 days
LEEDS: Tatler	April 4, 6 days
MANCHESTER: Tatler	April 4, 6 days
PLYMOUTH: Regent	April 25, 6 days
READING: Vaudeville	April 4, 6 days
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA: Kursaal	April 21, 3 days

Netherlands Old and New (Travelogue of Holland and the Island of Curacao).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BOURNEMOUTH: Premier News	April 11, 6 days
WEST KIRBY: Tudor	April 7, 3 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt.

CARLOW, I.E.S.: Palace	April 20, 2 days
OXFORD: Scala	April 28, 3 days
TOTTINGTON: Palace	April 14, 3 days
TOWYN: Cinema	April 25, 3 days
WHALEY BRIDGE: Princes	April 21, 3 days

FILMS
at the
TATLER THEATRE
Charing Cross Road

April 4	*The King's Breakfast* (Silhouette film by Lotte Reiniger) *Lake Como* (Coronel Films) *Mid Rock and Ice* (Colmore Films) *Roads to Records* (Strength and Beauty Series)
April 11	Easter Disney Cartoon season (1st week) *Family Fitness* (Strength and Beauty series)
April 18	Easter Disney Cartoon season (2nd week)
April 25	Easter Disney Cartoon season (3rd week) *Healthy Holidays* (Strength and Beauty series)

People in the Parks.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Paul Burnford.

BATLEY: Victoria	April 21, 3 days
ECCLESFIELD: Cinema	April 7, 3 days
GOSFORTH: Royalty	April 21, 3 days
HOLMFIRTH: Valley	April 18, 3 days
KNOWLE: Picture House	April 10, 1 day
LITTLEBORO: Queens	April 18, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	April 25, 6 days
NORTHALLERTON: Central	April 28, 3 days
PRAED STREET, W.: World News Theatre	April 14, 3 days

Secret Hiding Places (Priest holes to be found in English country houses).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
DIRECTION: Granville Squiers.

DALTON-IN-FURNESS: Roxy	April 14, 3 days
EAST GRINSTEAD: Radio Centre	April 4, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Smithtown Picture Playhouse	April 4, 3 days

Secrets of the Stars (Spotlight on British stages and studios).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Argyle British Productions Ltd.

BATH: News Theatre	April 4, 3 days
BRIDLINGTON: Lounge	April 21, 3 days
COVENTRY: Gaumont Palace	April 17, 1 day
CROUCH END: Hippodrome	April 25, 7 days
ST. LEONARDS: Kinema	April 4, 3 days
WORTHING: Rivoli	April 18, 6 days

Six-Thirty Collection (Documentary of the West End sorting office).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey.

WEST RIDING COUNTY INSTITUTIONS, SCALEBOR PARK: Middleborough Sanatorium Grassington Sanatorium	April 25, Showing Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

Southward Ho! (A journey across Franz-Josef glacier).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: C. E. Hodges.

COSHAM: Carlton	April 17, 4 days
FALKIRK: Pavilion	April 25, 6 days
HOYLAKE: Kingsway	April 4, 3 days
LONDON: Eros, Piccadilly Circus	April 4, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Charing X	April 11, 3 days
LONDON: News Theatre, Agar Street	April 11, 3 days
LEWES: Odeon	April 21, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Leicester Sq.	April 25, 3 days
RHYL: Odeon	April 18, 6 days
SOUTHESA: Apollo	April 17, 7 days
WORTHING: Rivoli	April 4, 4 days
WHALLEY RANGE: Odeon	April 11, 3 days

Sunny Tessin (Survey of the Canton Tessin, Southern Switzerland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

CHESTER: Music Hall	April 25, 3 days
COSHAM: Carlton	April 10, 4 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	April 18, 3 days
GRINSBURY: Savoy	April 28, 3 days
HARBORNE: Picture House	April 21, 3 days
INVERGORDEN: Playhouse	April 15, 2 days
LIVERPOOL: Bedford, Walton	April 21, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Rivoli, Aigburth	April 14, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Corona	April 21, 3 days
RUSHOLME: Casino	April 14, 3 days
SALISBURY: Gaumont Palace	April 11, 6 days
SALTAIRE: Picture House	April 21, 3 days
SIDMOUTH: Grand	April 28, 3 days
SOUTHSEA: Gaiety	April 10, 7 days
STRATFORD-ON-AVON: Picture House	April 28, 3 days
TAIN: Picture House	April 11, 2 days
WINCHESTER: Royal	April 18, 6 days

This Other Eden (A trip down the river Eden, in Westmorland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CAMBERLEY: Arcade	April 4, 3 days
COLCHESTER: Regal	April 11, 6 days
NOTTINGHAM: Ritz	April 11, 6 days
STAFFORD: Picture House	April 25, 3 days
STAINES: Majestic	April 14, 3 days

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Shorts (*Contd.*)

AMATEUR COMPETITIONS

First prize in the Scottish Youth Hostels competition was won by Messrs. Graham and Pettigrew, Coatbridge, Scotland, for their film *The Scottish Youth Hostel*. No other entry was of sufficiently high standard to justify a second prize award.

In connection with an Amateur films competition announced by the National Trust (7 Buckingham Place Gardens) in earlier editions of W.F.N., the committee have decided to offer a free copy of their films to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize-winners in the competition. As this can only apply to monochrome films, if any of the winning films should be in colour, the sum of three guineas will be awarded to any prize-winner submitting a coloured picture in lieu of a free copy of his or her film.

WEMBLEY: Capitol	April 4, 6 days
WEYBRIDGE: County	April 14, 3 days
WORTHING: Rivoli	April 25, 6 days
WINCHESTER: Royal	April 25, 3 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson.

BOLLINGTON: Empire	April 7, 3 days
BURNAGE: Lido	April 18, 6 days
DENTON: Palace	April 7, 3 days
GOSFORTH: Royalty	April 21, 3 days
HEYWOOD: Picturedrome	April 25, 6 days
PRAED STREET, W.: World News Theatre	April 28, 4 days
SALE: Pyramid	April 25, 6 days
WATERLOO, LIVERPOOL: Winter Gardens	April 25, 3 days

Tropical Springtime (Travelogue on Costa Rica).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

CHESTER: Music Hall	April 4, 6 days
ELGIN: Playhouse	April 4, 6 days
FARNBOROUGH: Rex	April 18, 3 days
INVERNESS: Playhouse	April 14, 3 days
JERSEY: Forum	April 4, 6 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Strand	April 7, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Princes Park	April 7, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Plaza	April 7, 3 days
LYDNEY: Picture House	April 21, 3 days
MORECAMBE: Tower	April 17, 1 day
SOUTHAMPTON: Regal	April 25, 6 days
SOUTHPORT: Palladium	April 10, 7 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Charing X	April 28, 4 days
LIVERPOOL: Empress	April 28, 3 days
ENFIELD: Palace	April 28, 3 days

Way to the Sea (Documentary of the roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes.

HARPURHEY: Princes	April 18, 3 days
KENDAL: Palladium	April 28, 3 days
KNOWLE: Picture House	April 10, 1 day
MACCLESFIELD: Regal	April 21, 3 days
NORTHALLERTON: Central	April 28, 3 days
STURMINSTER: Palace	April 13, 3 days
TISBURY: Palace	April 13, 3 days
MERE: Palace	April 13, 3 days
WEXFORD: Cinema	April 24, 1 day
WIGAN: Court	April 25, 6 days

Wheel and Woe (The evolution of the motor-car).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Liberty.
DIRECTION: W. G. Duncalf.

BIRKENHEAD: Plaza	April 25, 3 days
CHORLEY: Theatre Royal	April 25, 3 days
HUCKNALL: Byron	April 18, 3 days
HOLBECK: Queens	April 11, 6 days
NORTHWICH: Pavilion	April 11, 6 days
RUNCORN: Empress	April 4, 3 days
ST. AUSTELL: Odeon	April 21, 3 days

Foreign Films

La Tendre Ennemie.
PRODUCTION: Max Ophul.
DIRECTION Ben Tata
STARRING: Simone Berriau.
Catherine Fontenay
Jaqueline Daix
LONDON: Studio One — Indefinitely

Mother (Russian).
DIRECTION: Pudovkin
STARRING: Nicholai Batalov
Vera Baranovskaya
LONDON: Forum — Indefinitely (from April 3)

Double Crime sur la Ligne Maginot.
PRODUCTION: C.F.C.
DIRECTION: Félix Gandéra
STARRING: Victor Francen
Véra Korène
LONDON: Academy — Indefinitely

Nina Petrovna (French).
DIRECTION: V. Tourjansky
STARRING: Fernand Gravet
Isa Miranda
LONDON: Curzon — Till end of April

The Oyster Prineess (German).
PRODUCTION: Algassa Films, Berlin
DIRECTION: E. W. Emo
STARRING: Gusti Wolf
Theo Lingen
LONDON: Berkeley — Following Troika

J'Aecuse (French).
PRODUCTION: F.R.D.
DIRECTION: Abel Gance
STARRING: Victor Francen
Line Noro
LONDON: Curzon — Following Nina Petrovna

Troika (French).
PRODUCTION: C.F.D.
DIRECTION: Jean Dreville
STARRING: Charles Vanel
Jean Murat
LONDON: Berkeley — Indefinitely

RECORDING DOCUMENTARY FILMS

When considering recording his films, the documentary producer would do well to consult Imperial Sound Studios who have recorded over 1,000 successful subjects and have had years of experience in this work.

90 per cent of all the documentary films made in Great Britain are recorded by Imperial Sound Studios.

Imperial Sound Studios
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RADIO SPEECH

A Criticism by George Audit

ONE of the jobs at the B.B.C. most envied outside and most despised inside is the announcer's. To millions of folk he *is* the B.B.C., introducing every item, sometimes playing a minor part in a performance, always present in the background; to these his voice sounds cultured, impartial and restrained—just like the corporation itself. To others he sounds characterless, indifferent, snobbish.

Actually ten hours from each day's programme time are devoted to talking of one sort or another, and of the speakers, the majority are practically indistinguishable from each other. To anyone who lives in London and has spent his formative years in public school and university this manner of speech may seem the most natural thing in the world. However a large majority of the B.B.C.'s listeners spend their lives in provincial towns and villages, and to these the B.B.C. voice is as strange as London itself.

Some years ago the B.B.C. very wisely decided that the pronunciation of their announcers was a matter for serious consideration, and so they set up a permanent committee which included the late Robert Bridges, Bernard Shaw, Forbes-Robertson, Lascelles Abercrombie, Logan Pearsall Smith, Daniel Jones, Dr. Onions, with Lloyd James, who is a specialist in phonetics, as secretary. Since this country has no Academy as France has, to discuss and decide such vital matters as our daily speech, the B.B.C.'s advisory committee should be welcomed, and its findings treated with respect.

The committee first published a list of words in common usage together with recommended pronunciations. Unfortunately the phonetic symbols used to represent the sounds are not enough in themselves. They cannot define the timbre or pitch of a human voice, and on this very subject Professor Lloyd James has some very interesting things to say.

In books and broadcast talks he has fulminated against the "clerical" voice. He pokes fun at the accent which renders "entahly" for entirely, "stend" for stand, "ovah" for over, and so on. These peculiarities, he says, have developed with the drawn-out intonations necessary in church services. It has not occurred to him that this manner of speech is to-day much more typical of his own announcers than of the average radio parson. For his ingenious explanation might be extended to show that the "clerical" voice derives from monastic influences which in turn have permeated the language of Winchester, Eton, Oxford and Cambridge.

Professor Lloyd James is fond of pointing out the difference between the "literary" and the "vernacular". As he says the vernacular is primary, it is the language of the road, the workshop and the home. It is living in the sense that it is constantly changing, taking on fresh associations and exploiting new forms. It is so infinitely varied in its sounds and meaning that it is quite impossible ever to set down on paper its adequate reflection. The literary or printed language, on the other hand, is practically dead. Half of its sumbols are not spoken at all and it is looked upon as a sacred heritage whose modern temple is erected in Printing House Square.

Caxton was not the real offender as even scholars sometimes make out. In his day, and for generations after, printers spelt words as they liked and as they thought they sounded. It is only during the last three hundred years that writing has solidified.

Radio is BREAKING THIS DOWN . . . . As B.B.C. producers | are daily DRUMMING into the HEADS of their SPEAKERS | it is quite USELESS to write down a talk or conversation | and then to read it out ALOUD. Broadcast SPEECH | must be conceived AS SOUND. To overcome the universal TENDENCY to | "READ ALOUD", | producers mark up their scripts with caps, horizontal lines, vertical divisions, etc., as I have just done. But such marking only touches the fringe of the problem.

The most successful speakers have been such people as C. H. Middleton the gardener, Christopher Stone, and the late Frank Nicolls who played the Harry Hopeful parts. All three speakers appear to talk casually, spontaneously, intimately, as though their words are a perfectly natural expression of what they are thinking about at the time. They despise literary effects. Their use of the vernacular gives an impression of sincerity; it convinces, which is proved by the fact that Mr. Stone can always get at least ten times more money from a charity appeal than any other speaker, however eminent.

Trained announcers and orators cannot compete with these favourites. In the early days when announcers were known personalities (through Children's Hour activities, etc.) and were allowed to talk more or less as they liked or felt they got far more attention from their listeners, and voices like Rex Palmer's, Cecil Lewis's and Burrows's are not forgotten even to-day. But as the B.B.C. got more important and felt more responsible, it forced anonymity on its announcers and encouraged a uniform, disinterested delivery. I know there are some good reasons for this change but it has had the effect of encouraging the very affectations of speech that Professor Lloyd James condemns.

It is impossible to be impartial over this question of speech. The B.B.C. voice is an ironed out version of an accent associated with the public school and senior university. Its written counterpart is a *Times* leader. Few of us with that sort of background are conscious that it is just as "local" (in the sense that it is generated in only certain places and belongs primarily to certain occupations) as the dialect of a North Sea fisherman or a Welsh miner.

The Oxford voice (there are 70 Oxford men to 46 Cambridge at the B.B.C.) is not standard English. It is about as sensible to talk of standard English as to discuss a "standard" cheese. Language like cheese has a local habitation.

In my opinion the B.B.C. must recruit announcers who have outgrown their school voices; who can reflect culture and character without sounding snobbish. They must be commentators rather than readers. Local stations should have men with local accents.

The same argument applies to speakers in programmes. Harry Hopeful has shown that you can make the best programme about Lancashire out of Lancashire voices. Oxford men can speak for themselves, but not for anybody else. The film by John Grierson and Stuart Legg on the B.B.C. was an excellent illustration of this point. This documentary method has already spread to B.B.C. features, and it is to be hoped that as its full implications are realised we shall hear a lot more of the English language, the language of the street, the pub and the fireside.

Gerald Cock, Director of Television, writes on Fees

In the February issue of *World Film News* your contributor, George Audit, reviews television, with particular reference to some of its financial aspects. The second paragraph contains serious mis-statements of fact. He states: "That only allows for two hours transmitting a day and fees that are mere tokens. You have to be *some* celebrity to get more than a guinea for a show." Had your contributor troubled to inquire, he would have discovered that fees for television performances average approximately two-thirds of those paid for an equivalent in sound broadcasting. Sums from as low as one to three guineas are only paid as "expense fees" in a topical feature entitled "Picture Page", equivalent to sound's "In Town To-night." Both programmes normally consist of two to three minute interviews and not performances. Even in "Picture Page" when there is a performance by an artist it is remunerated accordingly. Fees as high as £60 can scarcely be regarded in the light of tokens outside the world of film production.

You will not wish to add to the constant flow of inaccurate legends concerning B.B.C. fees, which unfortunately may be believed by the public here and quoted by newspapers abroad.

George Audit says: Mr. Cock gives the game away when he admits that Television fees average only two-thirds of those for equivalent radio shows. The B.B.C.'s fees are so low that many of the best artists (such as Robeson and Gracie Fields) are quite out of reach. An actor in a radio performance gets five guineas for a show with often as many as five rehearsals. I call that a "token" payment.

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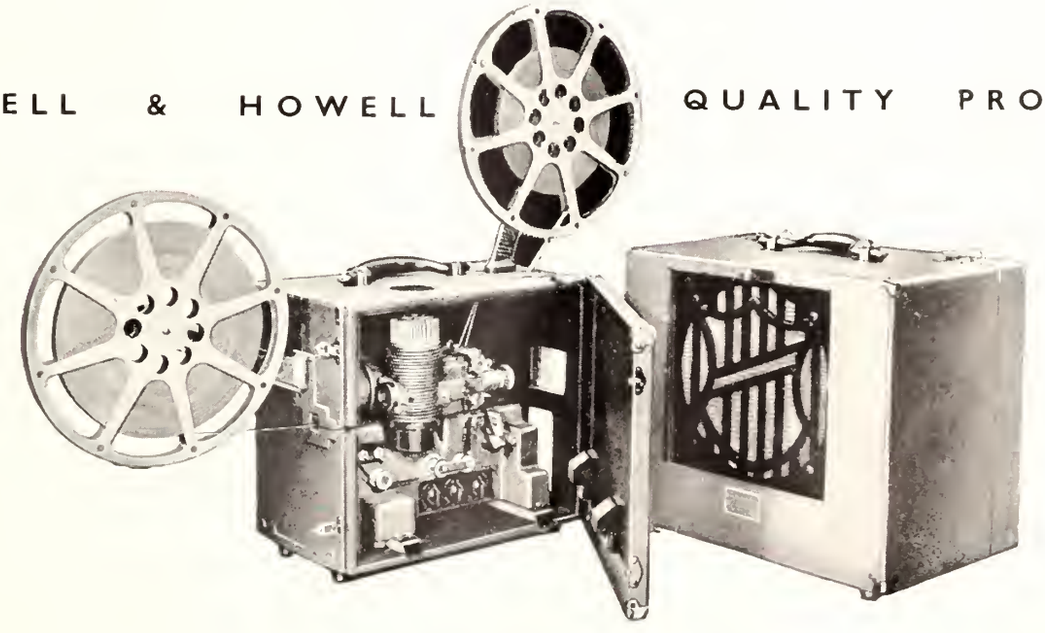

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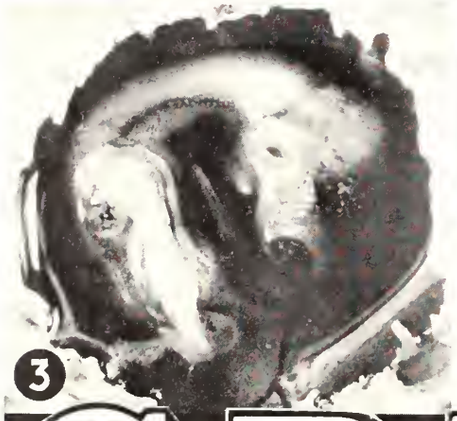

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WORLD FILM NEWS

MAY-JUNE 1938

Vol. 3 No. 2

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Still: Five Faces

Hollywood Is Where You Hang Your Head: by *William Saroyan* 52, 53, 73

Five Faces of Malaya 54, 55

North-West Frontier: by *Russell Ferguson* 56, 57

The Adventures of Marco Polo: by *Glen Norris* 58, 59

The Sound of History 60, 61, 62, 63

'Living Newspaper': by *Paul Rotha* 64, 65

When a Star Walks Out: by *Bette Davis* 66, 67

The Police Reporter Drinks: by *Clint Crews* 68, 69, 70, 71

Submarine D.1: by *Thomas Baird* 74, 75

British Exhibitors Mobilise Against Hollywood . . . 77, 78, 79, 80

Films Robert Flaherty Wants to See Again 81

Films Reviewed: by *John Grierson* and *Basil Wright* 82, 83

The Month's Releases 85

Review of Reviews: by *H. E. Blyth* 86, 87, 88, 89

Cockalorum: by *Rodney Hobson* 90, 91

Grown-Ups Prefer the Children's Hour: by *George Audit* . . . 93

Movies in Muswell Hill: *by Daphne Hudson* 95

Book Reviews 95, 96

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HOLLYWOOD is WHERE you HANG your HEAD

Story Conference. From the latest satire on Hollywood, Warner's 'Boy Meets Girl,' Cagney and O'Brien as the story writers, Dick Foran as the western star, Ralph Bellamy as the producer.

WHAT I'm talking about is *The American Writer and Hollywood.* By Hollywood I mean, naturally, the motion picture manufacturing industry. This industry has in a number of cases been generous to and kindly toward deserving American writers. It has enabled them to live, as it were, like kings. It has brought them from cold climates to a warm and pleasant climate, ideal for sleeping during the afternoon. It has lifted them from crowded slum streets populated by overworked and sickly human beings to clean, broad boulevards lousy with healthy, handsome, and under-worked human beings, generally in sports clothes. It has taught them how to dress, where to dine, what to drink, and how to do a small but pleasant variety of other things.

In return, however, the industry has not once, to my knowledge, received from any writer that force which has been the source of the writer's particular distinction. The industry, if it has gotten anything at all from the writer, has gotten something the writer discovered in Hollywood and is no good anywhere else. This thing may be politely called the ability to graciously wangle, bluff, and make friends.

For money, doing these things isn't worth the inner suffering that follows each day's performance.

If it were for comedy, one could tolerate one's self after the performance.

At best the writer wangles for something not worth getting; he bluffs about something he could never be serious about; and he makes friends with people he ordinarily would study carefully.

The fault is neither the industry's nor the writer's; the industry is in no need of literary genius, or expert talent. The industry does not photograph prose, it photographs people and places.

The most respected writers of Hollywood have not written and cannot write a decent story, essay, novel, or play. For the purposes of the industry, they don't need to be able to

Twenty-six year old William Saroyan has already achieved widespread recognition as one of America's most promising short story writers. His most recent successes include: *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, *Inhale and Exhale*, and *Little Children*.

Here he tells us just what success in Hollywood means to the young writer of to-day . . . "Hollywood doesn't need writers as writers —they are idea men, story discussers, plotmen, dialogue writers. . . . Respected writers of Hollywood cannot write a decent story, essay, novel or play."

★ ★ ★

do so. Outside of Hollywood, the writer has a tradition to guide, motivate and inspire him. He can starve and yet be impelled to try to write greatly without feeling foolish. He knows it happened before. In Hollywood there is a tradition all right, but it isn't the sort that keeps a man in good inward health, as the tradition of literature does. If the writer is wise enough or foolish enough to accept the Hollywood tradition he will be sure to eat and lose his health.

This is no lamentation. There is no particular harm or good in eating or not eating, in losing or not losing something. Not in the abstract, I mean. It really doesn't matter. Some critics might view the situation with alarm, and fret over the consequences to native life, literature and culture, but for myself I would say that such general consequences to such general terms are not worth fretting about.

Although the motion picture industry has been kind to a number of first-rate American writers it has been *most* kind to second, third, fourth and fifth-rate writers who, in all honesty, have been more useful to the industry than first-rate ones.

The reason this is so is easy to discover.

The moving-picture art is still an art for an unconscious and dreaming people. The public, according to the executives of the industry, wants this, and does not want this. The people want escape, fantasy, and beautiful unreality. The box office proves they do. They want beautiful human beings in beautiful stories. Actually, however (and I think this can be proved scientifically), the public wants mostly the darkness and secrecy of the picture theatre and two hours of dreaming; after that, it wants no more than appears there. I think the public will gladly take anything Hollywood chooses to give it. I honestly believe the public would revolt if for some wild reason the picture theatres of America were shut down. What they want is the place; once they are there they will take anything good or bad.

The public accepts good and bad pictures with the same indifference. The public is not participating in the growth of a new art; it is healing itself, every other day, of ill-health, unhappiness, spiritual starvation, loneliness and boredom.

Consequently, bad writers are good writers in Hollywood—they know what their employers want and they know how to make it for them. There is nothing in this set-up for anybody to feel superior about. It is an orderly and sensible set-up. When a good writer has anything to do with it, you can be sure it is because he needs or wants some money for a change. That's all.

When I first went to work in Hollywood I hoped to do the sort of writing I believed to be worth doing. I had a job. I was earning a good salary. I was eager about the possibilities of the form, and I was grateful to my employers. I worked hard. In addition to the work I was assigned to do, which was ordinary, I worked evenings and Sundays. I wrote an original picture story entitled: "The Travellers". My employer allowed me to read the story to him. He listened attentively, was impressed, but told me he wouldn't think of making a picture of the story. I was not trying to *sell* him the story. It was his. I had done it, supposedly, on his time. This story was what is known as a tragedy. At any rate the male and the female died.

My employer told me he understood what I was trying to do; he agreed that the story was not only good but would be easy and inexpensive to produce, but that it was certain to be a flop.

"Your story," he said, "is about several people the way they are. The public doesn't want that. They want to see themselves the way they aren't."

I was given new assignments. They weren't especially pleasing ones, but it was good discipline doing them. I asked if I might write an original story and was given permission to do so on company time. I wrote a sort of novelette about a football player who refused to stop being a hero after graduating from college.

The studio liked it and assigned to me to do the same sort of thing on a story that was not my own. I mean, I was asked to write another novelette. I didn't like the story and tried to get out of the assignment. I loafed on the job six days and was fired. This was proper. I didn't like the story. A good hack would have been able to do something with the story maybe, and maybe not. At any rate, I couldn't do anything with it. It bored me.

At this point, I believe, the matter was settled. I mean, about getting by in Hollywood. If I had cared to do that job, I daresay I would have become a prosperous member of the writing colony of Hollywood. Nevertheless, I was very happy when they fired me.

My next employer asked me to read three stories by Clarence Budington Kelland which had appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The stories were about a young lawyer who leaves New York and goes to a small average American town to shape a political career for himself, and does so. I spent about six weeks reading the stories and writing what is known as a treatment of them. My treatment pleased my employers and all seemed well, so I quit the job and returned to San Francisco.

I had proved to myself that I could, if I liked, be a success as a Hollywood writer. Anybody who can fool with three stories by Clarence Budington Kelland for six weeks is a natural-born cinch in Hollywood.

The question however is: What if you are a success in Hollywood? Suppose you are? So what?

Well, you wear tailor-made suits, expensive shirts, shoes, ties, socks, etc. You eat the best food. You live in swanky apartments. You drink the best liquor money can buy. You meet wealthy people and famous ones. You meet a very beautiful and famous actress, for instance, and discover she has the intelligence of a girl of eight. At the same time she is a brilliant conversationalist. You converse. Nothing happens to her intelligence. It is eight on on any subject. What she has, however, is something a lot more exciting than intelligence. I don't mean sex. I mean beauty and drive. She has an endless amount of each. The situation is awful and glorious. You meet also numerous producers; they are all human. You go to The Clover Club and gamble. You

(*Continued on page* 73)

FIVE FACES

An exclusive note on the making of Strand's new film, together with some observations on the races, customs and love life of the Malayans, by a doctor who spent many years among them.

FIVE Faces of Malaya, Alexander Shaw's 3,000 footer of Malaya, is soon to be released. I say to Shaw "What shall I say about it?" He says "You might point out that travelogue makers say that it is impossible to give a good impression of a country when you are moving quickly through it. I was alone there for three weeks, and although it was pretty hard going, I shot eight thousand feet."

After Shaw, I went to a doctor from Malaya and asked him about the people, and if you remember the following description of his when you see the film you will realise that for a three-week impression *Five Faces* is pretty hot.

"Probably about one in a hundred Europeans have ever seen a Sakai or Samang (the first face of Malaya). They are very scarce and very shy. If one saw a European on a path far up country he would dodge into the jungle as fast as 'scat'. It is true that of recent years a few civil servants have made contact with them but so far as I know they have successfully avoided us. One tin prospector did, in early days, succeed in enticing a female Sakai to his bedroom but when he came to he had a bump on his head as big as a coconut and that is the nearest a European ever got, I imagine.

"Shaw says at this point: 'Recently a great deal of anthropological work has been done

among the Sakai by H. D. Noone, and some are accessible now, if you don't mind riding on an elephant.'

"The Chinese (the second face) have been coming to Malaya for centuries looking for trade and tin. They got both. They own nearly all the towns of Malaya, more than half the tin fields, a good deal of the rubber lands, and do nearly all the shopkeeping. The Chinaman just works and works and works. He is the busy bee, the ant, the go-getter, the Jew, the Jap or what you will, of Malaya. If he is unlucky he dies pulling his barrow along Weld Quay or falls down dead between the shafts of his rickshaw after pulling it for fifteen years. If he is lucky he will finish up a millionaire towkay, with a fine fat belly and a red, round face. He will have achieved the glazed, bland, philosophical look that brandy buys. He will have taken several later wives and have a host of children, but his first wife will roar and raise hell in the kitchen to the end.

"Brandy and Guinness are the popular aphrodisiacs. For the wealthy towkay, rhinoceros horn or tiger's testicle are more potent delights. The Chinese work hard at everything.

"The Europeans (the third face) are the rarest face in Malaya, but it is possible to live in Singapore for years and see little else. Empire builders and pioneers do not live here any more.

"Someone has called Malaya a middle class paradise and that is just about it. Bankers, brokers, shippers, traders (wholesale, of course, so as to keep their social standing), doctors, dentists, divines—just that kind. There are lots of big executives, but they all have to bow mighty low when they go back to the office to explain to London why the profits are down. They leave no mark on the country except Golf Courses, Race Tracks and big Hotels—just like London—and all waiting for the day to retire with £600 a year to Tonbridge, Bexhill, Bognor.

"From the days of Stamford Raffles the country has had a series of grand Colonial Governors. The civil service is superb.

"The Tamil (the fourth face) was born to do Malaya donkey work. Every job that is dirty, undesirable and monotonous is the Tamil's. From the time he lands in Malaya he finds that the lot for which God created him is incessant work, and the very occasional wherewithal to get drunk. Doubtless Malaya objects that God might have created a better worker, for the lean gangling Tamil, with his big awkward feet can and does break in record time any machine or tool ever invented, create chaos that will take a European days to repair. In spite of Shaw the Tamil is also the world's noisiest worker—his is the only noisy face in Malaya—and he adds to the pandemonium of the day by his incessant brawling and wife beating to make the night hideous.

"Still the old Tamil does not do too badly, for he goes back to Malaya for subsequent spells and often settles down altogether. On all wealthy estates paternalism is practised, and it pays to cure his malaria-sodden body and care for his diet for he fills out well and breeds mightily, which is more than he can do in his native India. So Malaya gets more and better Tamils—and needs them—for Malaya can use plenty donkeys.

"The Malayans (the fifth face) number less than half the faces in Malaya. It might be said that they are dispossessed tenants, but things have worked out pretty well for them. Successive Colonial Governors have been so charmed with this race that they have seen to it that the Malay has had a square deal. Certainly he is the most independent, most untouched and least drawn into our own economic snare of all our 'subject peoples'.

"They have been dispossessed in one sense; their major export trade was continuous and successful piracy till a century ago. The staple home industry was family feud and inter-state war, and in quieter times the brighter spirits amused their days with knifing Chinese travellers and raiding Chinese villages. But these colourful times are gone. The Malay toils not and his wife does the spinning, but he will follow for days and perform heroics of endurance and abstinence in pursuit of tiger, crocodile, wild elephant or anything worth hunting. He has no use for mining or large scale agriculture, but he is a super craftsman of gold, silver or wood. He is said to love ceremonial and uniforms, but it is doubtful if he takes them seriously. As a well-graced actor he takes pride in the neat precision of his movements—but that is about all.

"Beautiful people these and worth a whole film to themselves. They have the loveliest babies in the world, somewhat pot-bellied from premature rice and bananas which may disturb their centres of gravity but never their good natures. The youths have every athletic grace without the athletic vice of over strenuousness, the men bestride their world with dignity and poise, proud and of a masterly courtesy. The aged chatter away their days in exchange of rhymed proverbs or tasting for the hundredth time the epic stories of old wars and the high days of piracy. No sensible Malay will ever go to bed as long as a few friends remain to yarn or the fiddler keeps on playing. The next day doesn't matter much. Let the other chap worry about new roads, new railways, telephones and sewers—it will probably improve the Malay's lot but the other chap seems to like it. Amused and tolerant and non-co-operating. The Malay's only clock is the sun and he is generally late on that."

NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

MUCH the most interesting thing about the North-West Frontier of India is the persistence of the traditions of the Pathans on the one hand and of the British administration on the other. A study of the relevant literature, drama and film reveals that in all their dealings with each other, the natives and the British punctiliously observe a pattern of behaviour which practically never varies in detail, and certainly never in essentials. Korda's new film, *The Drum*, is a valuable document, in that it sets out authoritatively all the principles involved.

Since the Pathans are a warlike people who live, so to speak, by killing each other, and the British are there to keep them in order, most of the business transacted—in fact all of it—is in the form of revolts, and since each side always behaves in the same way, all the revolts are exactly the same.

The opening gambit always rests with the native side. There are no instances of British troops starting a native revolt. The practice is for one chief to murder another, usurp his throne and prepare to start a revolution "along the entire frontier." All these affairs take place "along the entire frontier." The main tradition of the actual murder is that the usurper invariably allows someone to escape from the victim's household, in order to bring word to the British. This lets the British troops know that they have an away fixture.

The formality is always observed, but always unnecessary, for the Governor at Peshawar invariably knows all about the impending revolt beforehand. The reason for this is, that all British officers above the rank of a second lieutenant dress up, as part of their regular duty, in native clothes, dye their beards, and fetch information about machine-gun emplacements and revolts "along the entire frontier." But now we come to one of the

★ ★ ★

Russell Ferguson

not only beats 'The Drum'—he kicks a hole right through the middle.

★ ★

strongest of the British traditions, which is, to rely on character. The reply to the native threat always takes the form of a ball at the Residency at Peshawar.

This ball at the Residency, it may be noted in a historical aside, is in very old tradition. It is probably directly descended from the game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe, and has come down the centuries, via the dance before Waterloo (there was a sound of revelry by night) and the ball before Balaclava in *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. Anyway, whatever the historical origin, it is now an essential part of the social life of the military stationed in the East. Native unrest—ball, native unrest—ball, one follows the other in inexorable rhythm.

The function has, however, a further traditional purpose, for it is at this ball that the Governor's daughter gets engaged. In view of the native unrest, it is clear that someone will soon be required to be the only white woman in the hills, so the Governor makes haste to get his daughter married to a suitable officer, whom he will shortly put in charge of the revolt. The officer's name need not, of course, be Carruthers, but so many men of that name have put down revolts that if there is a Carruthers about he is the automatic choice.

The formula of betrothal varies but little. He says, "Could you give your life to the frontier—with me thrown in?" and she replies, "No, darling, but I could give my life to you, with the frontier thrown in."

By and by the bridegroom is taken aside, appointed to a new Residency established at the danger spot in the hills. This is not done in any precipitate manner, but after an adequate lapse of time, in order to ensure that the trouble will develop reasonably, so that when the troops go up they will be surrounded. What is the use of British troops unless they are surrounded? Everybody knows that they are not at their best unless they are hopelessly outnumbered.

Anyway, the practice is for the Governor to take the young man aside and say, "I want you to go up there and keep your eye on things." This, being translated, means "I want you to go up there and get surrounded."

So a small garrison of British troops moves into the Pathan city and awaits the next development. It is against the rules for the Pathans to murder the British at this stage. It has never happened—if it did, it would be much the same as shooting the fox on sight. On practical grounds, as well as in principle, it is impossible, for the preceding ritual takes several days, and no detail of it can be omitted. So the feast is fixed for several days ahead (massacres always take place at a feast).

Meantime the Pathan chief has several things to do. A lot of spying and counter-spying is involved. Both sides know all that is necessary to proceed, because the chief himself on his side spends most of his time giving broad hints of his intentions, while the British command is trying all the time to send the only white woman back to Peshawar. The spying continues, however, for the look of the thing. In passing, we may note that the spying could scarcely be dispensed with, in any case, because according to long established usage somebody has to be thrown into a dungeon with his tongue cut out.

In several interviews the Pathan chief kisses the white woman's hand and calls her the most beautiful rose in the gardens of the East.

When these and other preliminaries have taken place, it is time for feast, massacre and rescue. It is not unusual for the rescue to prevent the massacre, but if it does not, the main tradition to be observed is that no officers are to be killed, only common soldiers. Generally, determined attempts are made to kill the British commanding officer (in Korda's specimen, a machine gun trained upon him is fired continuously for several minutes) but never with serious consequences.

At the end, the Pathan chief is killed, preferably by the man who had his tongue cut out, and peace reigns once more. Another page of British history has been written.

All this, set out in Technicolour, makes a magnificent record of life in North-West India, the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. There are those who say that our old traditions are decaying—so they may be elsewhere, but not on the Frontier.

Mr. A. E. W. Mason, in introducing Sabu and Desmond Tester at the première of the film, said, "We had no idea of propaganda, but we hope you will see, in the friendship we have tried to portray between these young people, a symbol of the friendship which is so common between British people and the Pathans of North-West India."

This was well said, for these people, though treacherous, are very loyal, and we must always remember that although at regular intervals we have to go up among them with machine guns and artillery and knock hell out of them, they are our friends.

o officers are to be killed . . ." (*The Drum—London Films*)

THE ADVENTURES of MARCO POLO

Curiosity or cupidity, or both, made Marco Polo one of the world's greatest travellers. His exploits are the subject of a new United Artists film featuring Gary Cooper. GLEN NORRIS tells us something of the real Marco Polo.

Pilgrim—at the Western gate of Pekin: "It is a procession that never ends—the bearing of tribute to our Emperor Kublaï Khan. From the warm south come silks, spices, gold and jade; from the cold north come the skins of sables and ermine; from India, precious stones—all the treasures of the world for him who is great enough to command it."

WE jump back 750 years. In Europe it is the day of petty strong men, fighting about religion. The Crusades are flooding Greece, Turkey and Palestine in blood. Europe is so busy making war, it hasn't yet started learning to live. A few men have discovered that making money is more fun than killing. Of the traders, Venice is the Capital, the Venetians the leaders. As fast as the Crusaders conquer, the ships of Venice follow, to annex the trade, exploit the wealth of the land.

But in the East it is the day of the dictator. In the sun-parched desert of Mongolia, there is a thirteen-year-old boy who is destined to rise suddenly to prominence in world affairs; and achieve such a series of conquests as has no parallel in history.

The Mongols are tribes of wandering horsemen. They live in tents of felt, eat meat and drink mare's milk. The Chief of the leading tribe has just died, to be succeeded by his thirteen year old son, Jengiz Khan. The boy is a born fighter—he is also a propagandist. He preaches the doctrine of "One Race, One Nation". In turn he brings tribe after tribe under his banner. Then he looks towards North China, stages a dramatic "March on Pekin", captures the city, proclaims himself Emperor of the Mongols and Tartars.

Jengiz Khan then builds up the greatest war machine the world has ever seen: an army far ahead of anything in Europe. He uses the Chinese invention of gunpowder in small field guns. He has a system of spies working ahead of his army. He trains homing eagles to carry his messages. All these devices are unknown in the West. The best European generals are tyros of strategy compared to the Mongols. With this gigantic war machine Jengiz Khan begins an amazing march of conquest: Turkestan, Persia, Armenia, India down to Lahore, South Russia, west to Bulgaria, Hungary and Eastern Germany. At the pinnacle of their power, the Mongols exult: "In the strength of God we will overwhelm the whole Earth! If God were not with us, how could we be so strong?" Only the death of Jengiz Khan, and his son, Oktaï Khan, saves all Europe from certain invasion. Had it not been so, the whole history of the West might have been different.

The full flower of the Mongol Empire comes in the reign of Jengiz Khan's grandson, Kublaï Khan. Less of a fighter, he changes the rule of the dictator to the rule of learning and culture. While Europe is just yawning awake from a long, barbaric sleep, Kublaï Khan makes Pekin the most civilised city in the world.

An unbelievable splendour at court—a polish and courtesy that comes West only centuries later—tolerance: Jews and Christians have complete religious freedom. Marvels of engineering: the Great Wall of China —the Grand Canal from Pekin to Canton, still to-day the longest man-made waterway. In the arts, China is already mature: painting, engraving, bronze casting, sculpture and architecture. The invention of paper is already more than a thousand years old—wood blocks have been used for printing for three hundred years—printed books are in

circulation on every conceivable subject—internal trade is financed with *paper money*. Time is measured by water clocks—the stars are watched through telescopes—coal is mined—salt is extracted from brine. It is a world of wonders, and into it, wide-eyed, steps Marco Polo.

THERE are three Polos: Nicolo and Maffeo are brothers, Marco is Nicolo's son. They are Venetian merchants. They face ever fiercer competition for the home trade of the Mediterranean. When young Marco is six, Nicolo and Maffeo decide they must outdo their rivals by pushing further east. Leaving Marco at home, they travel to Constantinople, on through the Crimea, north along the Volga, east to Bokhara. Here they meet an ambassador from the court of Kublaï Khan. The ambassador persuades them to go with him on the gigantic journey across Asia. Kublaï Khan receives them with great honour. Their trade with the Mongol merchants brings them huge profits. When they head for home again, Kublaï Khan appoints them his personal ambassadors to carry greetings to the Pope, makes them promise to return. They reach Venice after nine years absence. Nicolo's wife is dead—Marco is fifteen.

Two years later, they set out to keep their promise, take Marco with them. Three men against the fury of nature, forcing their way across the wild vastness of Asia. After three years of hardship and hunger, at last they bow low before Kublaï Khan. They bring a letter from the Pope, sacred oil from the Holy Land, and Marco. He is 21—the Emperor is 59. Between these two, there grows one of the strangest friendships in history.

Marco learns the languages and customs of the Mongol Empire. Kublaï Khan finds him tactful and intelligent, soon gives the boy important political work, makes him a member of the Imperial Council, sends him on missions to all parts of the Empire. Marco discovers that Kublaï Khan has an insatiable appetite for details of the life of his subjects. So the young Venetian keeps a notebook of strange facts, to be related to the Emperor. Marco holds one important post after another. During one of the local wars, the Polos help design a catapult to hurl 300 lb. stones at the enemy.

All three Polos remain at the court of Kublaï Khan for seventeen years. Now that the Emperor is nearing death, they fear that his passing may put them into the hands of their enemies. They ask to be allowed to return home. Kublaï Khan is so attached to them, he refuses to let them go. At last their chance comes. Kublaï Khan's daughter, the Princess Kukachin, has been betrothed to the Khan of Persia. She must sail to the land of her future husband. The Polos are expert navigators—they beg to be allowed to pilot her ship. Reluctantly, Kublaï Khan agrees. It takes them two years to reach Persia. Princess Kukachin finds that her future husband is already dead—she marries his son. A year later the Polos are back in Venice. Waiting for them, is the news that Kublaï Khan is

dead, his Empire already beginning to crumble.

Three years later. Marco has become involved in a local feud between Venice and Genoa. He has been taken prisoner in a battle between rival ships, is in a Genoese prison. During the years that pass before his release, he dictates the story of his travels. He paints so vast a canvas, that for hundreds of years men call him a liar. Only within the last century have explorers finally proved the uncanny accuracy of his observation. His is one of the world's greatest stories. Now into it steps a modern adventurer, cinema producer Sam Goldwyn, to bring the story to life on the screen.

IN Hollywood, history is a good servant but a bad master. Screen-Marco, Gary Cooper re-lives the adventures against the authentic background, but sometimes he moves some way off the path of his namesake. The film sends him alone on his journey, while Nicolo and Maffeo "mind the shop" at home. In the Mongol Empire his "adventures" include the discovery of spaghetti, gunpowder, and coal (all authentic). He finds an easy-going almost childishly simple Kublaï Khan, practically ruled by a sinister Ahmed. In the course of unmasking the villainous Ahmed, Marco falls in love with Princess Kukachin, helps Kublai Khan pick girls for the harem, plays the leading part in quelling a Tartar rising, saves the Emperor from losing his throne, and as a magnificent climax, leads the storming of Pekin to rescue the Princess from Ahmed's clutches.

But the neatest trick of the film is in the last scene. Marco is to escort Princess Kukachin to Persia—she asks how long it will take to get there: he replies, "Oh! Years . . . and years . . . and years"—they kiss—the music swells to the fade-out.

In the true story, when the journey to Persia started, Marco was over forty, the Princess seventeen; and their relationship was that of father and daughter. When Marco found that the man to whom the Princess was betrothed was dead, she was at once palmed off on the son. But perhaps the sight of a film heroine treating Gary Cooper like a father would be more than the cinema could bear!

MARCO (Gary Cooper)—to candidate for Harem duty: "How many teeth has a snapping turtle?"
KUBLAI KHAN (George Barbier)—from the throne: "Group two dismissed!"
PRINCESS KUKACHIN (Sigrid Gurie)—sitting below Kublaï: "Take this Venetian and let him see how you dispose of them."

THE SOUND OF HISTORY . .

THE FIRST DAY
FRIDAY, MARCH 11

7.56 a.m. AUSTRIAN KETTLE BOILS

CBS Announcer: "Austria—The Austrian tea kettle is likely to boil over any minute. . . . Chancellor Schuschnigg says that, if necessary, he will proclaim martial law on Sunday when Austria's seven and a half million citizens vote in the national independence referendum. Meanwhile Nazi anger over the election is growing more intense and anything is liable to happen. . . . The Austrian-German frontier at Salzburg was mysteriously closed for an hour this morning. No explanation was given. . . . And here's a bulletin that's just come in from Vienna. Chancellor Schuschnigg has sent out a call for army reserve men to aid in preserving order over the weekend".

9.25 a.m. NAZIS BATTLE POLICE

CBS Announcer: "Innsbruck—Angry Nazis are battling with the police in the streets of Innsbruck. The officers are said to be using bayoneted rifles and sabres to subdue the Nazis, who are estimated to number as many as fifteen thousand. The police are reported to have only a few hundred men".

12.29 p.m. REFERENDUM DOOMED

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—The general election on Austrian independence has been postponed. This has just been announced in an official broadcast. From other sources it is reported that the popular referendum set for Sunday is not only to be postponed, but cancelled by decision of the Cabinet which is meeting right now over the tense situation. . . . The action was taken under the extreme pressure of Germany, which is reported to have given Schuschnigg a virtual ultimatum while it concentrated German troops on the Austrian border".

2.15 p.m. SCHUSCHNIGG RESIGNS

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—It is officially announced that Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg has resigned. The announcement has just been broadcast by the official government radio station".

2.45 p.m. TROOPS CROSS BORDER

CBS Announcer: "This is a bulletin which the Associated Press has just received from Vienna. The Austrian Government press bureau announces that German troops have crossed the Austrian border at the town of Tassau".

3.43 p.m. SWASTIKA OVER VIENNA

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—The swastika flag is now flying from the top of the Chancellory building, which is the seat of the Austrian Government. But so far there is no official announcement as to what is going on inside the building. . . ."

6 p.m. SCHUSCHNIGG'S FAREWELL

CBS Announcer: "Austria is in the hands of the Nazis and all Europe is in a turmoil. In a farewell radio address Schuschnigg told the people that he had been compelled to back down under threats of violence from Germany".

7.30 p.m. FRENCH-BRITISH PROTEST

CBS Announcer: "Paris—The French government has just joined with the British in protesting to Adolf Hitler for the use of coercion in Austria. The note warns that the action Germany is taking 'must entail grave repercussions, the consequences of which cannot be foreseen' ".

11.15 p.m. CHRONICLERS OF FACT

James Austin: "What seemed destined to be a day in which domestic news would prevail over foreign news, developed, hour by hour, into a chronicle of European upheaval. . . . What will be the result of this tense situation, we cannot say; we are reporters of occurrences; chroniclers of fact." (*Mr. Austin then proceeded to recount and summarize for the CBS audience, the vivid 'newsbreaks' of the day*).

12 Midnight. SPECIAL CBS NEWS FLASH

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—The Nazis are now holding jubilation meetings throughout the country and the swastika flag of Germany is flying from all public buildings".

Six Days that shook the world in March 1938. The Central Scene is Vienna, the chief actor Adolf Hitler and the historians are the Radio Reporters of the Columbia Broadcasting System of America.

Hour by hour the crisis was reported from the main European centres. We give here only short extracts but, we hope, enough to provide a basis for comparison with the news services of our own B.B.C. Here is an international event, history on the march, reported in a dramatic, realistic fashion that should stir our radio newsmen into a critical examination of their present methods.

THE SECOND DAY

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

7.55 a.m. HITLER NEARS AUSTRIA

CBS Announcer: "Adolf Hitler, former Austrian house painter, is returning to his homeland as a conqueror. He already is somewhere close to the Austrian border".

9.55 a.m. "I SHALL BE HAPPY"

CBS Announcer: "German troops are marching over all the frontiers of Austria. . . . Chancellor Hitler, himself, took off from Berlin in a plane. Just before he left, Hitler announced a proclamation to the world. 'I, as Fuehrer—Chancellor of Germany—shall be happy to enter Austria as a German and a free citizen of a country which is also my homeland . . . ' One hundred German transport planes took off and flew over the Austrian border. It is understood that the planes carried troops to Vienna".

12.45 p.m. ENTRY INTO AUSTRIA

CBS Announcer: "Chancellor Adolf Hitler has made a triumphant entry into Austria, the land of his birth, and is being wildly acclaimed by the people. . . . A great torchlight procession is being prepared in his honour in the Austrian capital and all Nazi organisations have been summoned by radio to take part in the reception".

3 p.m. "DEUTSCHLAND, SIEG HEIL!"

CBS Announcer: "Linz, Austria—Chancellor Adolf Hitler has just finished an eloquent address to the people of Austria. . . . Hitler declared that he has at last won the goal for which he had fought and struggled for many years, namely to unite his homeland of Austria with Germany, the Motherland. Hitler concluded the speech by shouting, 'Deutschland, Sieg Heil' ".

5.47 p.m. FRENCH GUARD BORDER

CBS Announcer: "Paris—The French troops along the German border have been ordered to remain at their posts without leave until further notice. . . ."

6.25 p.m. EIGHTY MILES FROM VIENNA

CBS Announcer: "Hitler started by motor for Vienna, the capital, for his crowning triumph. He is expected to stay to-night in the town of Amstetten, eighty miles from Vienna, and enter the capital to-morrow with all the pomp, ceremony and fanfare of a conquering hero".

6.30 p.m. EYE-WITNESS REPORT

CBS Announcer: "We take you now to London, England".

William L. Shirer: "Hello, America! . . . When I returned to Vienna yesterday morning from Yugoslavia, I found tension. . . . As I made my way from the station to my home, I found the Vienna streets littered with millions of electioneering leaflets, calling on the populace to vote for Schuschnigg and Austrian independence. . . . I went into the Swansenburg Café and encountered some Austrian newspapermen who reported that the Nazis had just broken the windows of the Monarchist's offices and that the Monarchists were a bit frightened. But no one in the café seemed unduly nervous. We had the impression, I must admit, that the plebiscite would go out peacefully. We heard the radio announce a call-out of the whole class of army reserves to keep order. We know now that that was Dr. Schuschnigg's first answer to Hitler's ultimatum, but at that time we thought it would help insure peaceful election. . . .

"I'm here to-night to report what I saw, not to give my personal opinions. I saw no disorders in Vienna provoked by the workers. But when I arrived in Berlin this noon I found that the newspapers were appearing in flaming headlines about violent Red disorders, as they put it, in Vienna. And I have here before me the front page of Chancellor Hitler's own newspaper, the focus of attention this morning. Its banner headline reads: 'GERMAN-AUSTRIA SAVED FROM CHAOS' . . . People here to-night keep asking me who were the Nazis from Berlin who superintended last night's remarkable turn of events. Well, there were conflicting reports in both Vienna and Berlin, but early this morning we were officially informed in Vienna that Rudolph Hess, Hitler's deputy and right-hand man, had arrived during the evening and gone straight to the Chancellory. I believe it was about midnight when I went hot-footing it, with about one hundred thousand others, to the place, where, rumour has it, Hess would speak. But he failed to show up. Another man sent from Vienna was Joseph Buerckel whom I had met during the Saar plebiscite just a few years ago and who did such an efficient job there. . . .

6.33 p.m.

"Austria's resistance to Nazi Socialism actually collapsed at 6.15 p.m. yesterday, when it was announced on the radio that the plebiscite had been indefinitely postponed. . . . When the radio announcement came over the loudspeaker, the Fatherland Front people and the workers melted away and stole home as best they could. On the other hand, it was the signal for the Nazis to come out and capture the streets of the capital. And yet, as late as 6 p.m., the picture had been quite different. I was walking across a large square just a block from the Opera, at six, just as two lone policemen were driving a crowd of 500 Nazis off the square without the slightest difficulty. A half hour later you would not have recognised Vienna as being the same city.

6.34 p.m.

"With the announcement that the plebiscite was off, the Nazis suddenly poured by tens of thousands into the old inner city. . . . I saw a strange sight: twenty men, bent down, formed a human pyramid, and a little man—I suppose he was picked for his weight—scampered over a lot of shoulders and, clutching a huge swastika flag, climbed to the balcony of the Chancellory. It was on this balcony less than four years ago that Major Fey, held prisoner by the Nazis after Dollfuss was shot, parleyed with Dr. Schuschnigg's Provincial Government. . . .

"By 2 a.m. there were few policemen to be seen in the streets. Instead, the Nazis in civilian clothes and with fixed bayonets were keeping order. By 3 a.m. the streets were fairly quiet. I decided before calling it a night to go over to the central telegraph office where many of the newspaper correspondents file their stories. . . . Inside I found the Nazis had taken complete charge."

London Announcer: "We now return you to America".

THE THIRD DAY

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

7 a.m. ULTIMATUM TO GREAT BRITAIN

CBS Announcer: "London—It has just been learned on high authority that Czechoslovakia has sent an ultimatum to Great Britain on the Austrian crisis. . . . It asserted

that unless Britain is ready to take concrete action on the present crisis, Czechoslovakia will be forced to reconsider its entire foreign policy. . . ".

8.15 a.m. WAR PLANES OVER CZECHS

CBS Announcer: "Berlin—It became known this morning that a number of German war planes had flown over Czechoslovakian territory. The Czech government announced that Germany has promised a full investigation of the incident".

8.45 a.m. HITLER AT LEONDING

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—This morning Hitler visited the graves of his parents at Leonding. . . ".

11.29 a.m. "NO AFFAIR OF OUTSIDE WORLD"

CBS Announcer: "Berlin—Field-Marshal Hermann Goering, Hitler's right-hand man, has declared that the Austro-German relations are no affair of the outside world . . .".

3 p.m. MIKLAS RESIGNS

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—A new general election to indicate Austrian approval or disapproval of the new union between Germany and Austria has just been announced for April 10th. The announcement came immediately on the heels of the resignation of President Wilhelm Miklas, who left office under Nazi pressure".

8.26 p.m. VIENNA

Edward Murrow: "This is Edward Murrow speaking from Vienna. It's now nearly 2.30 in the morning and Herr Hitler has not yet arrived. No one seems to know just when he will get here, but most people expect him sometime after ten to-morrow morning.

"I arrived here by air from Warsaw and Berlin only a few hours ago. I'd like to tell you a few things seen and heard in the course of the day. From the air Vienna didn't look much different, but nevertheless it's changed. The crowds are courteous as they've always been, but many people are in a holiday mood. They lift the right arm a little higher here than in Berlin, and 'Heil, Hitler' is said a little more loudly. . . . Nearly every principal building has its armed guard, including the one from which I'm speaking. . . .

"We're planning to bring you an eye-witness account of Herr Hitler's entry into Vienna sometime to-morrow and we return you now to America".

Bob Trout: "And now in our studios in Washington, D.C., we're to hear from the Honourable Lewis B. Schwellenbach, Democratic Senator from the State of Washington. We take you now to Washington, D.C."

8.31 p.m. WASHINGTON

Senator Schwellenbach: "Never in the world's history has it been more necessary for democracy to work than it is for democracy to work here now. . . . The permanent advance of civilisation depends upon the successful maintenance of democratic institutions somewhere. That place should be here. Let us turn our hands to that task. Let no outside influences turn us from it".

THE FOURTH DAY

MONDAY, MARCH 14

5.59 a.m. 10,000 TROOPS

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—Ten thousand additional German troops arrived here last night in 500 armoured cars and tanks, 2,000 on motor-cycles and 3,000 by train. . . . Masses are shouting, singing, waving flags and milling through the streets. Older people, however, are not so pleased. They ask whether Vienna, renowned for music, art and beauty, might not now lose the glories of a once mighty world capital. . . ."

6.30 a.m. BEDROCK OF SECURITY

CBS Announcer: "We take you now to London, England".

6.31 a.m.

Sir Frederick Whyte: "Good morning, everybody. Neither England nor France to-day is worrying so much about Austria and Germany actually coming together, but it's the way in which it is being done. It has shaken the foundations of Europe as nothing has done since the Great War itself. This has had a sobering—I think I ought to say also a consolidating effect—in Britain. . . . What is uppermost to-day, is the feeling that if all these interesting treaties we've made amount to nothing, then we've got down to the bedrock of security, which means the power to protect ourselves . . . ".

English Announcer: "Sir Frederick is going down to Parliament which opens in just three hours. He has consented to go on the air later and give you a first hand account of the Prime Minister's statement. We return you now to America".

7.5 a.m. VIENNA STOCK EXCHANGE CLOSED

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—The stock exchange has been ordered closed until further notice to prevent flight of capital. . . . Konrad Henlein, leader of the Sudeten-German party (in Czechoslovakia) told rejoicing followers, 'Victory is ours' ".

7.32 a.m. SLOW APPROACH . . .

CBS Announcer: "Adolf Hitler is slowly approaching Vienna. The winding roads along the Danube River were so thickly massed with cheering throngs that the motor-car could proceed at only the slowest pace. It appears that it may take Hitler many hours to reach Vienna".

7.55 a.m. SLOW RECOGNITION . . .

CBS Announcer: "Washington—Our government is going to take its time about recognising Germany's annexation of Austria. The State Department is determined to proceed slowly and cautiously. The government won't even consider a course of action until it receives official notice that Austria is no longer an independent nation. Also the State Department will wait to see what Great Britain and France intend to do".

9.25 a.m. DUCE TO FUEHRER

CBS Announcer: "Rome—In a telegram to Hitler, Il Duce declared: 'My attitude is determined by the friendship between our two countries consecrated in the Rome-Berlin axis' ".

11.14 a.m. FIVE O'CLOCK IN VIENNA

CBS Announcer: "Adolf Hitler has just entered Vienna. The German Chancellor and his motor cavalcade escort passed through the city limits a few minutes before eleven o'clock, New York time, or five o'clock Vienna time".

12.30 p.m. THE HARD FACT

CBS Announcer: "We take you now to London, England".

Sir Frederick Whyte: "I've just this moment come up from the House of Commons. The government was there in full force. Mr. Winston Churchill was in his usual place below the gangway, Lady Astor sitting behind him, and the benches were reasonably well filled. One notable absentee was Mr. Lloyd George.

12.32 p.m.

"The Prime Minister, instead of making a long speech, spoke exactly twenty-six minutes. . . . He used these words, 'The hard fact is that nothing could have arrested what has actually happened—unless this country and other countries had been prepared to use force'.

"The sting of the speech came in the tail. Mr. Chamberlain told the House that the programme of British rearmament had always been subject to review in the light of international developments, and it would be idle to pretend that recent events did not constitute a change justifying such review. These are the words on which Chamberlain sat down: 'The government has decided to make such a review and in due course will announce the further steps they might think it necessary to take'. . . ".

London Announcer: "We return you now to America".

2 p.m. NO FORCE!

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—Adolf Hitler made a short speech after his arrival in Vienna to-day. Hitler shouted: 'No force on earth can stop us. This German Reich never again will fall asunder. Nobody can force it from its road. No threat, no misery, no violence can ever cause this oath to be broken' ".

3 p.m. CBS . . . FROM VIENNA

CBS Announcer: "We take you now to Vienna, Austria".

Edward Murrow: "Hello, America. . . . Herr Hitler is now at the Imperial Hotel. To-morrow there is to be a big parade and at that time he will probably make his major speech. . . . Planes were soaring overhead. There seemed to be literally miles of uniforms; but then the real parade doesn't come until to-morrow.

"The banks in Vienna closed this morning. Long lines formed outside before they opened. And they remained open only for a short time and then closed. It is stated that limited payments will probably be resumed sometime to-morrow.

3.7 p.m.

"*Die Stürmer*, Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic paper, appeared on the streets here to-day. It was announced that the usual disabilities against Jews will apply in connection with the plebiscite to be held on April 10th. . . . Please don't think that everyone in Vienna was out to greet Herr Hitler to-day. There is tragedy as well as rejoicing in this city to-night. The speed with which the new organisation has been established is truly amazing. Those who had been true to the part have been rewarded. Those without sincerity or enthusiasm sufficient for the requirements of the party have been replaced. . . . It's of course impossible to determine the amount of reorganisation that has taken place and is not yet finished. I am told that it is progressing with remarkable speed. . . . The German soldiers are obviously enjoying themselves. A number of them are quartered in a building just next to the one from which I am speaking. They're sleeping on straw and there are stacked rifles and iron helmets arranged neatly along the wall. They don't talk a great deal with the Viennese, but they're always courteous and they certainly give the impression of iron discipline.

"Well, to-morrow will be another day of festivity in Vienna. It's possible that the course of certain events now scheduled may be changed. This regime, of course, maintains the greatest secrecy regarding plans, but when it decides to move, it acts with appalling speed and decisiveness".

6 p.m. TERROR

CBS Announcer: "In Vienna and throughout Austria, the Jews and other non-Nazi groups are terror-stricken over the threat of persecution. Germany's foremost Jew-baiter, Julius Streicher, is reported on his way to Vienna. Austrian Catholics are also fearful, and the Vatican official newspaper in Rome says they have reason to be. The Jewish director of the Vienna Opera, Bruno Walter, has resigned and Dr. Hermann Roebbling, another Jew, was removed as head of the famous old Burg Theatre. The former Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg is under arrest in his Vienna home and ex-President Miklas is virtually a prisoner also".

10.47 p.m. VIENNA

Edward Murrow: "Hello, America, this is Vienna calling. It's nearly five in the morning, and all is quiet. . . . SS men in black uniforms stand guard at the Imperial Hotel where Herr Hitler is spending the night. . . . The city has been comparatively quiet since before midnight. I visited several night clubs and restaurants. There was little singing of military songs, practically no drunkenness, nothing that might be called a celebration".

THE FIFTH DAY

TUESDAY, MARCH 15

5.6 a.m. IN HEROES' SQUARE

CBS Announcer: "Vienna is now witnessing one of the greatest spectacles the city has ever known in its long and colourful history. Right now in Heroes' Square, in front of the old Imperial Palace, hundreds of thousands of persons are massed to hear Adolf Hitler speak. It is the first major address the German Fuehrer has ever made on his native soil".

5.8 a.m. "I PROCLAIM MY MISSION"

CBS Announcer: "A broadcast is in progress describing the ceremonies preceding Adolf Hitler's speech. Our translator is standing-by here to translate at intervals what he hears from Vienna. We take you now to Vienna, Austria".

German Announcer: "Ladies and gentlemen, you are now hearing a reception from Vienna for Reich Chancellor Hitler, who will deliver his speech any minute. . . . Dr. Arthur von Seyss-Inquart, the leader of the Austrian part of the Reich, is now addressing the people. . . . Dr. Seyss-Inquart is saying: 'I announce to the entire world that Chancellor Hitler has entered the capital of Austria—Vienna. The Reich has been reorganised and has been re-established and you, my leader, are greeted as the creator of a new Reich. My leader, we know only one thing—that is, our most sincere thanks to you'".

Translator: "And now the Chancellor himself is addressing the multitude. You are now hearing Chancellor Hitler, who has just said: 'German men and women! Within the last few days a change has taken place in the union of the German nation, which is being witnessed by millions to-day, the importance of which, however, can and will be estimated in its entire significance only by the generations to come. . . '".

German Announcer: "The cheers have died down. The two German national anthems, the Deutschland Lied and the Horst Wessel Lied, the latter long forbidden in Austria, have died down; we can now conclude this special broadcast arranged for the benefit of our American listeners. Your announcer returns you to America".

6.3 a.m. CORRESPONDENTS IMPRISONED

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—Shortly before Hitler began to speak, about thirty-five foreign correspondents assigned to cover the address, found themselves prisoners in the Chancellory. They were told they would be released fifteen minutes after Hitler started speaking".

7 a.m. NO HALF-WAY MEASURES

CBS Announcer: "We take you now to Vienna, Austria".

Edward Murrow: "Hello, America. This is Vienna calling. Herr Hitler has made his speech from the balcony of the Hapsburg or King's Palace. He arrived again standing in an open car. He went up to the balcony and looked out over a sea of upraised arms, people shouting, cheering. There was certainly nothing half-hearted about the cheering. . . ".

8 a.m. CBS . . . TO VIENNA . . . TO BERLIN

CBS Announcer: "Columbia takes you once again to Vienna for a broadcast of the ceremonies attending the visit of Austria's new leader, Adolf Hitler. Hitler, we have just been told, is at the war memorial in the Austrian capital. We switch you now to Vienna, Austria".

But it proved to be impossible to broadcast directly from Vienna to America at this time. An instantaneous switch was made to Berlin and the Berlin announcer's report of the Viennese scene (coming to him by land line) was broadcast to the Columbia audience.

Berlin Announcer: "Hello, America. This is Berlin calling. Berlin trying to give you some idea of what is going on in Vienna on the Maria Theresian Square now. We have to explain why we cannot speak to you from Vienna itself; why we cannot actually describe the moving scene to you from there. We've only got a single land line from Vienna to Germany and all we can do is to pass on to you what is going over the German stations at this moment. I am listening myself, as you are too, to what is going on in Vienna.

"The Chancellor is now standing on the grandstand on the base of the War Memorial on Maria Theresian Square, on Vienna's Mainstrasse. He is looking up now to his squadrons of German air force flying past and opening the military display. The first squadron is now up in the air. It's the German Air Force parading with 400 planes, and that is apparently a grand sight for the Viennese. I think that this scene this afternoon will mark the end of all the surprising events of the week-end. Quieter times will start, and times probably full of all kinds of decrees, laws and so on that will regulate the life of Austria within the new German Empire".

6.55 p.m. HITLER BACK TO GERMANY

CBS Announcer: "Adolf Hitler has gone back to Germany, and now the rest of Europe is waiting anxiously to see what he will do next. To-morrow morning Hitler will make his triumphal re-entry into Berlin, and the German capital is planning the greatest welcome in its history".

12 midnight. MUSSOLINI TO SPEAK

CBS Announcer: "In Rome to-morrow morning, Premier Mussolini will deliver an address in which he is expected to define the attitude of Italy toward the conquest of Austria. The speech is being awaited with great interest in all capitals as one that may have an important bearing on European peace".

THE SIXTH DAY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

6.45 a.m. MAJOR FEY, SUICIDE

CBS Announcer: "Vienna—Major Emil Fey, former Vice-Chancellor, has just shot his wife and 19-year-old son, after which he killed himself. The tragedy occurred just twenty-four hours after Adolf Hitler made his triumphant entry into Austria".

11 a.m. MUSSOLINI . . . FROM ROME

CBS Announcer: "We bring you now a special trans-Atlantic broadcast by Premier Benito Mussolini . . . " (*Columbia's Broadcast continued for several days. We are compelled to end our extract at this point.*)

An account of the Ame

"LIVING NE

by PAUL

From the London production "Living Theatre No. 1" (*John Vickers*)

DRAMATISED facts, living news, staged current events—these find a thirsty public in the United States to-day. New forms and techniques are being used in this effort to meet a demand for information; a demand which arose largely as a result of the great depression. Until 1929, the American public took most things for granted. There were money and jobs around. Since then, they're asking why.

March of Time on radio and film helps to answer this. The flood of photo-journalism that sweeps America is another part of the reply. Backward in England, the theatre in America is tackling subjects of burning topical interest. Labour struggles, unionism, strike-breaking, problems of slum clearance and cheap power. The New York stage is alive. Part of its vitality must be traced to the Federal Theatre Project and its breakaway groups like the Mercury Theatre. For sure, the Federal Theatre Project has given one new idea to the theatre—*The Living Newspaper*.

The Federal Theatre Project was set up under general Government works relief programme (the WPA) early in 1934. At first, 150 actors and technicians were employed on the scheme, which was supervised by the kind of army officials who directed relief work in general. The plays were old favourites: *The School for Scandal* and *Skinner's Dress Suit* shared an engagement. Most of them were presented in obscure theatres and without adequate equipment or professional advice. Theatre workers as a whole were loth to associate themselves with the Project. Aside from the stigma of "being on relief", they were afraid of the low professional standard of the scheme and its effect on their reputations.

Criticisms of the Project, backed by letters in the Press from serious playwrights and actors, eventually reached responsible ears at Washington. As a result, a change in administration was authorised. Mrs. Hallie Flanagan, for years an organiser of independent theatrical ventures, was given complete charge of the Federal Theatre Project; Elmer Rice accepted the post of Regional Director for New York. Mr. Rice, in particular, was trusted to make the Project something more than a meagre provider for starving theatre workers.

To-day, the Federal Government plays have an audience of half a million a week in all parts of America, many people in such areas as New England and the deep South seeing a theatre for the first time in their lives.

The Living Newspaper is only a small division of the main Project. According to Morris Watson, original supervisor of the scheme, the idea of *The Living Newspaper* was born in October 1935, and directly arose from Elmer Rice. No one person, however, can take credit for the idea. It has grown as a result of collective effort by producers, writers and actors. In 1935, the Newspaper Guild of New York was looking for some way in which to absorb a few of its unemployed journalists in the recently reorganised Theatre Project. The Guild's Unemployment Committee went to Elmer Rice, who suggested that a project be formed to present news on the stage. Morris Watson, an unemployed newspaperman, was chosen to head the project.

There were some precedents for presenting news on the stage. In 1933–34 a 'smart' commercial revue, *As Thousands Cheer*, used newspaper headlines as a structure for its satiric sketches. The Workers' Laboratory Theatre and some vaudeville producers had attempted to dramatise news events. Of most of these precedents Morris Watson, Elmer Rice and their associates were unaware, but they acknowledge a debt to *The March of Time*.

They began by dramatising news of the tabloid kind—Tart Shoots Lover—but soon realised that by the time their skits reached the stage the news would be dead. Rice then suggested and authorised the dramatisation of controversial news, which by being controversial would remain alive until it could be presented on the stage. The staff, relying upon Rice's authority, set to work to dramatise the international topic of the moment—the struggle in Ethiopia.

Months of research by newspaper men attached to the Project resulted in the selec-

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tion and authentication of the crucial episodes of the massacre and its international repercussions. Only incidents admitted to by all parties were used; claims and counterclaims of importance were given as such in the mouths of the officials who had presented them at the time. No claim was stated without opposition reply.

Opening scenes in Italy and Abyssinia were followed by League of Nations' conferences, the outlining of the Hoare-Laval plan, Hoare's defence in Parliament and a cross-section of scenes representing the currents of British public opinion which forced Hoare's resignation and Baldwin's admission of error. Statesmen, soldiers, politicians were all represented realistically on the stage by actors.

Ethiopia was shown to the Press on January 24th, 1936. It was well praised. Just before its public opening, the WPA officials stepped in and stopped production. "Almost certainly," a Government-sponsored play about such a subject would be construed by Italy as "an unfriendly act."

Press and theatre protested against the ban. Elmer Rice, stating that he had been given complete authority to produce, resigned. "Government censorship of *The Living Newspaper*," he said, "would mean the end of its usefulness."

Undaunted, *The Living Newspaper* writers at once set out to dramatise a home subject—the problem of over-production in agriculture, the efforts of the New Deal to solve the question by legislation and the results of the Supreme Court's invalidation of the AAA. *Triple-A Plowed Under*, directed by Joe Losey, received wide Press acclaim.

The story of the agricultural problem in its developing phases was narrated through quickly shifting scenes in which type characters expressed the viewpoints of the classes which they typified. Drama critics were surprised at the liveliness of these figures, which were never characterised fully because of lack of space. Use was made of expressionist scenery and contrapuntal dialogue. In addition, this second edition of *The Living Newspaper* gave a brief background of the post-war years of boom and depression in relation to agriculture, rather like the prologue to the documentary film *To-day We Live*—a part of the play which raised protests from Tory newspapers.

The next edition, also directed by Losey, was a survey of the events of the year 1935 in social terms. It was described as weak and diffused even by sympathetic critics; but it is worth noting that each successive edition of *The Living Newspaper* proceeded further from immediate news events towards a generalised interpretation of their root causes.

Losey again directed the fourth edition, *Injunction Granted!* which was exhaustively criticised by a Press now accustomed to seeing news on the stage. Here in thirty scenes was the story of American Labour. The play drew these conclusions: that throughout their history the American workers have always been exploited by their employers with the aid of the courts, that the latter issued injunctions freely, interpreted the Constitution in favour of the employer and utilised the legal frame-up to send working-class leaders to jail and death. Criticism was made that the second half of the play introduced the internal Labour issue of Lewis's C.I.O. struggle against Green's A.F. of L. and thus confused the main issue of the argument.

Connected with the writing side of *The Living Newspaper* from outset, Arthur Arent was responsible for the script of *Power*, which dealt with electricity and the T.V.A. plan, and, with a staff of thirty research workers, for the production now playing in New York . . . *One-Third of a Nation* . . . The title is taken from Roosevelt's second inauguration speech that he found ". . . one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad and ill-nourished."

It tells swiftly and vividly the story of Manhattan's slums, of the greed of its landlords, of public apathy towards the injustices and legal violations that have permitted this ghastly state of living to occur. Against Howard Bay's magnificent set of a cross-sectioned tenement, four stories tall, with rotting balustrades, inadequate fire-escapes and filthy dark rooms, there is told a chronicle of real estate in Manhattan, embracing the system of land ownership that permitted the Astor and Rhinelander families to exploit their property, a dramatic fire-outbreak, a cholera plague, an episode of juvenile delinquency, a rent strike, documentary evidence by means of a film of the housing conditions in New York City to-day, and a lantern-slide tour round New York as it was in the fifties.

The style is bitingly satirical and openly Left Wing and has no respect for persons either dead or living. No small part is played by "The Voice" of *The Living Newspaper* itself, questioning and explaining through a loud-speaker in the auditorium. On a much bigger scale and without the personal interviews, . . . *One-Third of a Nation* . . . is the theatrical counterpart of Elton and Anstey's *Housing Problems*. It is real documentary theatre.

Not all the current New York plays that dramatise labour problems and news events are by the Federal Theatre Project. The Mercury Theatre, a group that broke away from the Project, is playing Marc Blitzstein's brilliant opera *The Cradle Will Rock*, the story of unionism in Steel Town, U.S.A. It was first produced as a Federal Theatre Project last year, banned before the first night, with the result that Blitzstein and some of the actors found another theatre at the eleventh hour and put on the play without scenery or properties, Blitzstein himself having to take several parts. This winter the Mercury Theatre put it on with Orson Welles producing but still without scenery. It is playing to packed houses and has started a vogue for plays without scenery, a vogue that is causing anxiety to the Scene-Shifters' Union who may find themselves picketing plays which present their own cause.

Unionism is again the chief theme running through the brightest and most satirical revue Broadway has seen for years—*Pins and Needles*—produced, financed, written and acted by members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Its high-spot numbers are "Sing Us a Song with Social Significance", "One Big Union for Two" and "Four Little Angels of Peace Are We", the latter being sung by Hitler, Mussolini, Anthony Eden and a Japanese General.

Its actors are from New York's department stores. What began by being a modest little revue by garment workers (New York's biggest industry) is now so much of a Broadway success that you can't buy a seat for weeks ahead. Two companies are taking it out on the road and a movie is being discussed.

While Labour in London digs into the sacred graves of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, Labour over there is dramatising the vital issues of the moment and at the same time bringing a new creative spirit into the theatre. But then they don't stand nonsense about a Lord Chamberlain nor do they have restrictions about the representation of living personages on the stage.

LONDON'S "LIVING NEWSPAPER"

Borrowing the idea from America, the Unity Theatre Players, London, have just produced the first English *Living Newspaper*—"Busmen". John Allan, the director, bravely attempts to dramatise the main events preceding, during, and after the Bus Strike, 1937. Being unable to portray well-known living people on the English stage or to use their voices robs the play of much of its vitality, although the writers have invented clever devices to overcome this handicap. There are faults: relation between The Voice of the *Living Newspaper* (via loudspeaker) and the staged action is ill-established: the continuity is lazy: the script could stand cutting: acting values are below those of the American productions. But this is a first effort, obviously with little finance and little time for rehearsal. It sets a good example for future productions with brisker technique and greater use of documentary evidence. But its producers should remember that their audience must be the man-in-the-street, not the "converted intellectual."

P.R.

WHEN A STAR WALKS OUT . . .

BETTE DAVIS. Warner Bros. star of "Jezebel", "Petrified Forest", "Of Human Bondage", "Marked Woman" and many other films, writes on the work of a screen actress.

THE most important consideration in a star's career is choice of story. . . . Studios employ many talented people for the sole purpose of finding suitable material for their top players, and only in rare cases is the star permitted to make her own selection. Her opinion may be asked, but the final decision rests with the studio officials. Usually Joe Doaks on Main Street knows what her next assignment will be as soon as she does—it all depends on who reads the morning papers first.

I personally believe this is not as unfair as it seems, for I am of the opinion that actors and actresses are notoriously bad judges of story material. Principally interested in the part intended for us and the number of good meaty scenes there are for us to play, we are apt to lose sight completely of weak and insignificant plot construction or the development of the rest of the characters in the story. . . .

Neither does it follow that the studios are always right. Often a studio has a script ready to go into production with an inferior and uninteresting leading role for either the actor or the actress, but the picture must be made immediately to meet a release date. Since players are put under contract in order to retain their exclusive services, they must be paid whether they are working or not; and when they are not working they are a worrisome item of expense. If the studio has scheduled nothing suitable for the star at such a time, she may be requested to go into this production even though they know it is unjust, and there is nothing for her to do but play the part, knowing the public will think less of her for it—or refuse to do it, which usually results in suspension without salary for as long as it takes to make the picture in question. In short, she gets spanked either way.

When the public reads in the newspapers that a star has "walked out on" her studio, their natural reaction is to say, "Tsk! Tsk! —Temper—temper . . . !" Actually the reason for it is more likely to be her refusal to disappoint her audiences by letting them see her in a role wholly unsuited to her talents and below the standard that she has consistently fought to maintain.

The number of pictures a star makes annually is almost as important as the selection of her stories. It is easy for an audience to tire of an actress it sees too often—and it appears to get just as weary of her if it doesn't see her often enough. In my present contract there is no limit to the number of pictures I make in a year, but I believe that a contract limiting an actress to four is neither detrimental to her career nor unfair to her studio. If I were free-lancing, three would be my limit; first, because screen acting is such exhausting work that I think we need long vacations between pictures; and second, because it is almost impossible to find more than three stories in a year's time which are both well-suited to me and worth your money at the box office.

Nothing is more staggering to me than to be asked how I create a character. There just isn't any one answer to that question. It depends entirely on what the assignment happens to be.

If I am to play the leading lady in a modern picture, my worries as an actress are concerned with wardrobe, hairdress, learning the script, and interpreting it to make the most of whatever opportunities it offers me. I make a practice of discussing all these things with the director as soon as possible, to make sure that our conceptions of the character are enough alike to avoid misunderstandings and costly waste of time on the set while the film is in production.

I should like to add, here, that I have never played a part which I did not feel was a person very different from myself. The character I am playing stays behind in my dressing-room at the end of the day and is waiting for me there the following morning.

I do not intend this to sound as if I were "arty" about my work. On the contrary, I am extremely workmanlike. Perhaps it is explained by the fact that I have never—except when I am actually working—been able to realise that I am known as an actress. You have no idea how grateful I am for this frame of mind in Hollywood, where it is not easy to keep a normal outlook on oneself as a person. While I am acting I am living in an imaginary world, bringing imaginary people to life, just as I used to "live" the fairy stories I read when I was a little girl. And I think it's the grandest game in the world. Whether or not I am always successful at it, I am constantly trying to make my audience know these "phantom" friends of mine as well as I do.

When the director and I have agreed on the appearance of the character, the head costume designer (Mr. Orry Kelly) and I confer for hours. He makes many sketches which we discuss as to their suitability for both her and me, and when we have finally decided what she is going to wear, the pins, shears and needles start flying in the workroom.

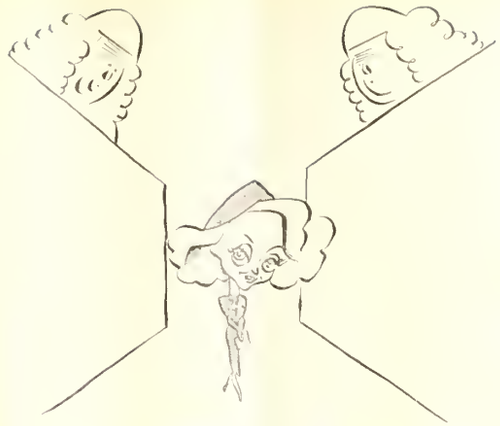
Fitting and sewing costumes year in and year out, the skilful women in the workroom are faithful and loyal to their stars. Though they receive no credit for the final product, they are as interested as we are in seeing that gowns are perfect in every detail. Often they are more patient than we during the long hours we must stand for fittings. They know how the camera will emphasise the slightest wrinkle or bad line, and avoiding these defects is a matter of pride with them.

The completed gowns must be tested before the camera. This is very important, for even though our costume designers are trained to know what colours, materials and body lines are photographically "right", they sometimes make mistakes. A costume which is charming to the eye often proves most unattractive photographically, and must be replaced or changed. Preliminary tests of wardrobe may save the studio large sums of money which might otherwise have to be spent on retakes during production.

"Hair tests" are necessary for the same reason. If the camera doesn't happen to like our hairdress, it can do disastrous things to us. And unless the cameraman is accustomed to working with us, he usually wants to make photographic tests to discover our best "angles" and the most effective lighting for our features.

By the time all of these tests have been made and approved by the director and the production head, we are ready to start on the actual work of making the picture.

All of this, as I said, is the customary preparation for a simple, modern leading role. If, however, I am assigned to portray a famous character from history or a well-known fictional character, or a person with an accent unfamiliar to me, the little duties really start piling up. Endless hours must be spent in reading about them, studying their lives and habits, until I feel I know them so well I couldn't possibly do anything inconsistent with their characterisation. Imagine how much preparation Paul Muni must have spent on Pasteur and Zola. I also collect pictures of these people at all stages of their lives if they are historical, so as to be able to



BETTE DAVIS (*Vicky*)

resemble them as closely as possible physically. Make-up must be minutely tested to get the nearest facial similarity we can, and the costumes of the period must be studied thoroughly to avoid anachronisms and errors in detail.

For a fictional character such as Mildred in *Of Human Bondage*, the novel is used as a textbook—read and re-read until I am thoroughly acquainted with her every thought. Scattered descriptions are carefully checked for indications of dress and mannerism.

Once we start working on a production, that is *all* we are able to do until it is finished. After hours, an actress who is conscientious about her work is too tired mentally and physically to think of anything but a nice, long, beautiful rest. Fortunately or unfortunately, I am one of those. If the material in the picture is worthless, one has to work twice as hard to make something of it; but I have a sincere desire always to be able to say when the picture is finished that I have done the very best I could with the part.

YOU smiled when I said we get dog-tired. The surest way I know to convince you of this is to show you just how we work, by describing an average *shooting day*.

I get the gentle but compelling touch on the shoulder between six and six-thirty in the morning—depending on how far I am living from the studio and how elaborate my make-up is for the picture I am doing. After I have arrived at the studio, it takes at least two hours to have my hair dressed and dried and my make-up applied. There is usually just time to get to the set by nine o'clock and put on my costume. I am then ready to rehearse for the first scene of the day.

The amount of rehearsing we do is entirely dependent on the director. Some directors believe that lots of it insures a better performance when the cameras start grinding. I agree with them. As far as I'm concerned, there can never be too much rehearsal, for during this time the cast learns to work together and often discovers bits of business that give the screen play naturalness and smoothness.

When we have finished rehearsing, the cameraman is given free rein to light the set. Stand-ins, resembling the actors in height, weight and general colouring, go through the action to be shot, while the cameraman arranges the lights. This gives the cast a chance to cool off, refresh their make-up, see that all the curls are where they belong, and to discuss the scene with the director if necessary. Then one final rehearsal for the actors, the camera and the sound department—and the scene is ready to be taken.

If a scene is shot only once, the incident is recorded as a major miracle. More commonly it has to be repeated from three to as many as fifteen times. Before a take is O.K.d it has to be right for the director as far as performances are concerned, for the cameraman, and for the sound department. The last is a particularly exacting master. The sound man must hear every word distinctly, unimpaired by outside noises such as airplane motors, passing trucks, coughs, footfalls, or any of a million and one other incidental sounds. Since the members of the crew know how difficult it is to keep a scene alive beyond the third take, they do everything in their power to keep things going smoothly. You never saw such a display of mass patience and precaution! Often, of course, the actors themselves are responsible for spoiling the shot. We just can't get that "something" the director is looking for—and we *have* been known to muff lines. The success of a day on the set is determined by the degree of co-operation between director, crew and players.

An hour for lunch, then back to freshen make-up and hairdress and begin again. The day is usually over at six, after which most of us spend half an hour in a projection room seeing the rushes of the previous day's shooting. Now we go to our dressing-rooms, remove make-up, put on street clothes—and go home, arriving there between seven and eight o'clock, slightly the worse for a working day of from twelve to fourteen hours.

But that is not the end of it. Dinner, then off to a quiet corner with the script, to batten down enough dialogue to carry us through to-morrow. For us, ten-thirty is bed-time; there's very little a make-up man can do with circles under our eyes.

A day's work, and work it is—every minute of it. I don't think you can name any other profession that requires so many actual working hours spent in producing something to be seen and judged by millions of people the world over. It is largely our awareness of responsibility to all those people that makes the actual shooting of a picture so nerve-racking. Every take must be approached as if it were the one which you will see in your theatre. Everything we've got must go into everything we do.

Fortunately, inside most of us is the love to create, and we are more than willing to devote the best years of our lives to it. Hollywood pays us well, but the applause we receive from our audiences stimulates us to go on and do finer things. We want you to let us know you like us. Call it childlike if you will: but since our profession is dedicated to bringing you moments of pleasure, the measure of our success is your response to what we do. You, the audience, are literally the fuel that keeps the fire going. Never for a minute think we are bored by your praise. It is what we live for.

Extracted from Bette Davis's contribution to 'We Make the Movies' by kind permission of the publishers, Faber & Faber. The book is reviewed on page 96.

The Police Reporter

I PICKED the note up from the dresser. It read: "Dear Jack—I am taking this way out so you can go back to your four-bit whore, you bastard, you. Mary."

On the bed, writhing and squirming, was a good looking 22-year-old girl. She had taken poison. I, a police reporter, was there with the officers. She was shot to the emergency hospital for treatment, but it did no good. She died.

Can you imagine such a note from one who is about to die? Even if she was the prostitute she was, even if she believed her life was a shattered wreck, she was still good looking. She could have gotten by without much trouble. Yet the workings of the human mind are peculiar to the layman (and, I suspect, to psychiatrists, too, after hearing scores of them offer contradictory testimony from the witness stand). Here this girl, her mind bent on suicide, takes her last moments to write a note to her pimp, hoping it will hurt him more than anything else she could do. Maybe that is why she wanted to die. Whether it hurt the pimp is another question. I doubt it. There probably was a story behind it all, but I did not have the time to investigate.

A police reporter has an odd, nerve-shattering job. To the morbidly curious, those who love to stand in the way over a dead body, those who must stop in the highway to see the mangled remains of some automobile wreck, those who crowd the criminal courtrooms to take one look at some poor devil about to be sentenced to death and then go home and tell the family about it at the dinner table to a chorus of "Oh's" and "Ah's", it must be grand. Maybe to the cub reporter it is grand, too. But one does not have to be on the job long before blood, dead or mangled bodies, automobile wrecks, fires, emergency hospitals, suicides, crime in all its fantastic forms, jail bars and human beings behind them, begin to drop a curtain over the mind, a curtain of hardness which is not good. It becomes nothing but work. The sound of a siren coming to me through the open window of the press room in police headquarters did not indicate a means of satisfying any morbid curiosity of mine, it just meant more work. I saw mothers' tears, wives' tears, husbands' tears, the tears of all the loved ones of the thousand and one victims.

I, like a ghoul, had to get a story about, a story to be read by thousands of morbidly curious, a story which meant more circulation for the newspaper which employed me. The city editor and the managing editor were demanding. They, of course, did not have to see those bodies, they did not have to talk to parents, wives, husbands, or sweethearts of the victim; all they had to do was sit at a desk in the office and demand more gruesome details, details which the reader would gobble up in the evening.

Reader interest, they called it.

They are right in a commercial sense, of course. The more blood which can be scattered on the front page, the more papers will be sold. But the police reporter, talking to some woman freshly widowed by a suicide husband, with three or four children to support, and no one to support them, does not think of sales. He cannot help, no matter how long he has been in the business, thinking of the problem the woman faces, let alone her grief. True, he casts it off when he gets back to police headquarters and begins dictating his story, but only for the time being. When he gets home in the evening, supposedly to relax, what does he think of? He thinks of the widow and her children, he thinks of the reasons a man sought death from his own hand, he thinks of the hundreds of incidents he had witnessed throughout the day, broken bodies on the hard table in the emergency hospital, wounded bodies, pain-wracked bodies. He tries to throw it off and cannot. He finally gets to sleep, only to wake up in the morning and go through it again. It's just the same, only the names and faces are different.

Back in journalism school I was told that blood, women and prominent names were the requisites of all good news stories. They are. Gather all three in a story and you will probably get a slighter grunt from the city editor than you would if nothing happened to "break" throughout the day. In other words if someone commits a sensational suicide, kills his wife or someone else, the city editor is pleased. The managing editor probably told him it was a very good story.

If some too ardent sweetheart shoots her inamorato on a down-town street and the story gets to the office a few minutes too late for the next edition, the police reporter gets hell because he missed the edition. Of course he used up all of his time at a pace his friends, if they could have seen him, would have said he was crazy to travel. It often seemed to me the city editor gloated over the fact I had missed the edition, but, in truth, he was sorry the girl did not shoot her boy friend soon enough.

I SPENT ten years as a police reporter in West Coast cities, seven more as a political reporter. I do not know which was the worst. I can sit around now and think of the lives I have ruined, the scandal and turmoil I have directly caused, the private tragedies I have spilled out to the world. While in Fresno, California, I can recollect how I altered the tax rate a nickel on the hundred dollars of assessed valuation. I brought it down that nickel in the face of hypocritical, church-going politicians. That seems like a ray of sunshine in the gloom. But why did I do it? I did it to make a hit with my city editor. Why would the city editor like it? Because the managing editor would like it. And why did the managing editor like it? Because it would make people, the readers and potential readers, think the only thing between them and the grafting politicians was the dear old newspaper. Therefore they would give their support to the newspaper, subscribe for it, advertise in it, all of which meant cash in the cash register in the newspaper's business office.

I have to laugh now when I think of one of my city editors. When I worked for him I used to gnash my teeth, even have bad dreams about him. He was a small-town city editor, henpecked at home, but a devil in the office. A bridge-playing, courteous gentleman at home, with very little experience on what we called "the street", entertaining the very doctors, dentists and attorneys, he gave me hell for not printing more fully some little incident which came to the public notice, but which would ruin the practice of any one of them. To them, at his home, he was a wonderful host, but in the office he demanded their blood. Sometimes he got it, and in his home he offered the most abject apologies, blaming it all on the police reporter. He was that sort of a guy.

Another city editor, one in Los Angeles, knew his business from A to Z. He had, however, the same cold-blooded characteristics all city editors have. He demanded his blood. But he knew what the police reporter was up against. He had been one himself in his younger days. . . .

All this is not conducive to the sleep of a police reporter. God knows he has plenty of things to dream about other than the vagaries of a city editor who never had experience covering police but who demands news.

The reporter generally is equipped with a police badge. What he does with this badge is very much his own business. The police are afraid of a police reporter. He uses the badge to get news. He uses it to bulldoze the people he interviews, to frighten them with the authority of the law despite the fact there is no more authority under that badge than there would be behind a book salesman's business card. Often he goes with the police, in a police automobile, on calls involving shootings, suicides, riots. He muscles into a private home on the heels of the officers, looking much like an officer himself, and the citizens promptly think he is an officer and tell him things they would not dream of telling if they knew him for what he is. If there is a photograph of the victim or of some member of the family, he steals it and slips it in his coat pocket, or under his belt. Any complaints about the theft to headquarters, he knows will be quashed. Any complaints to his newspaper office after the photograph is published, will mean but a compliment from the city editor. This is journalistic enterprise. In his story he freely uses the names of the officers he accompanied. Those names in the newspaper cover all his crimes against the citizen. Every police reporter, every police officer and a few citizens know these to be facts. Why, it concerns the freedom of the press, and everyone knows the freedom of the press under the constitution is inviolate.

THE freedom of the press goes a little farther than the matter of news. Among other duties of the police reporter is the fixing of traffic tags for himself, the other reporters on the paper, circulation trucks, the city editor and his friends, the managing editor and his friends and the publisher and his

Drinks . . .

Reporters have made raw-material for some of Hollywood's most exciting and entertaining films.

Do American newspapermen resemble their screen likenesses? Part answer to this comes from CLINT CREWS, who gives a breath-taking account of his experiences as a police reporter.

This article was written for America's smartest and most sophisticated monthly 'Esquire,' from which, as a gesture towards better Anglo-American understanding, we have had kind permission to reprint.

(Midnight Court, Warner's)

friends. And any other friends who may loom on the horizon of plain, crooked politics. If the police happen to be a little ornery about fixing the tags (there is often a cry about tag fixing from some irate citizen who was stuck with a goodly fine), the reporter will take the tags to the police judge, who will turn them over to his clerk, who will place opposite the names on the book the notation, "dismissed" or "sentence suspended". It is all done in about five minutes. Sometimes the police reporter gets ten or fifteen tags in the course of the day, ranging from parking overtime to reckless driving, even to driving while intoxicated. He is expected to fix all of these. . . . Police judges have to run for office and a police reporter on the side of a police judge prior to election is a valuable asset. There are so many chances the police reporter has to bring the judge's name before the public, day after day, until John Citizen, seeing the name so often, thinks of nothing but putting his X after it on the ballot. . . .

Driving up the peninsula to San Francisco from Fresno a year or so ago at 4 a.m. I was arrested in one of the many small towns which follow one after the other on the way. I was arrested for doing 65 miles an hour in a 25-mile zone. After I had shown my operator's licence carrying my name and address, business address, namely the name of the paper with which I was employed in Fresno, he asked me what I did on the paper. I told him I was a police reporter,

"Well", he said, "it's too late now as I have the tag made out and these carbons have to go to Sacramento, but if you are a police reporter you will know what to do about it." I did know what to do about it and I did it. I never heard any more from the tag, although I read in a Bay Area newspaper where the judge in that town gave a citizen five days in jail for doing 66 miles an hour at the same intersection at 3 a.m., a day after I was tagged. Perhaps the extra mile and the different hour brought about his sentence.

Many business men wonder sometimes why their offices were raided by the police or the district attorney's office. The police reporter knows. They were raided on the possibility, often probability, such raids would make news. It is true that in the name of justice the offices as a general rule should be raided. However the police reporter is not concerned with justice, he is concerned with the one thing—news. News is all that concerns his editors also. It was the hope of news that made the reporter argue with the chief of police, or district attorney, or captain of detectives, whoever the official might be, the offices should be raided as a smart move on the official's part, a move which would bring justice to a head, a move which would make a hit with the public. Moreover it does make a hit with the public. You can tell it by the newspaper sales. Everyone is satisfied except the victim and no one has much sympathy for him anyhow.

Many times the reporter is acting on direct instructions from his office. No newspaper editor expects the public to keep on buying papers carrying the same news. There must be something new every edition. The raid gives a new angle to the story. For the next edition—well, human ingenuity is always able to dig up something. . . .

Some of the things for which the police reporter, acting on his own initiative or on direct instructions from his office, is responsible, unquestionably reflect to the good of the community. But the good of the community be hanged if it happens to stand in the way of realising the supreme ambition of the press—news. How many times has the daily press published crime stories which placed the police under a handicap and allowed the criminal to escape? Pick up your daily paper and scan the crime stories. Somewhere among them you will find a story portraying police plans with such detail the hunted man would have to be blind as well as dumb not to effect his getaway. Some smart police reporter talked some enthusiastic officer out of the story, the officer being enthusiastic mainly about getting his name in the paper. He gets it, the reporter gets the story, the criminal escapes—everyone is happy except the public, and the public does not seem to care much so long as it can read an interesting story in the paper.

The public would care, however, if it knew that increased fines could be laid at the door of the reporter. It does not know. It just accepts it as bad nature on the part of the police judge and lets it go at that perhaps with the fleeting thought it will vote for someone else at the next election.

(Continued on next page)

'The Police Reporter Drinks . . .' *(continued)*

NOT only is John Q. Citizen the victim of the police reporter. Sometimes even the chief of police falls in that category through complaints to the mayor or through literary chicanery in the handling of news stories. In one city where I worked a new chief of police had just been appointed. The police reporters gathered in the assembly room at police headquarters to hear his premier address to the police organisation as a whole. The new chief of police threw all of the police reporters out without even giving a thought to their protests. He told them what he had to say to the department was none of their business, nor the business of the press or public. He had the peculiar idea police business should have some semblance of secrecy at least. Throwing the police reporters out on such an occasion had much the same effect on the press "God Save the King" would have at a convention of Irish Republicans.

The boys promptly set out to get him, and get him they did, within the next three months. It was during the noble experiment and the new chief desired to see that the prohibition laws were enforced. He made his error in taking time from his office to personally see that bootleggers were arrested. He liked to head raiding squads. The boys in the press-room learned this, and it was a weapon in their hands, proving later a very effective weapon. At last the time came.

Out heading one of his raiding squads the chief was absent from his office when a bank was stuck up for $40,000. The police reporters went to town on this. They variously started their stories something like this:

"While Chief of Police Doakes was heading a raiding squad in a raid at 222A Street today, bandits held up the First National Bank and escaped with $40,000."

This didn't make much of a hit with anyone, particularly the bankers. A few more stories of this sort and delegations began to call on the mayor. There was a conference between the mayor and the chief. The police reporters were not allowed in on this conference either. They did not have to be. They knew what it was all about. The chief resigned.

Some police reporters are far from loath to earn a little extra dough on the side. Now do not misunderstand. You could not pay one for keeping a story out of the paper, but you might be able to pay him to get a story in the paper. Suppose you are a restaurant proprietor, operating Green's Café. Officers take a criminal who is in the headlines to your restaurant. Grease the police reporter's palm and you will read that night the criminal ate at Green's Café. No grease, no café. It will simply read that Detective-Lieutenant Brown took the killer to a local restaurant. That is called publicity and some newspapers allow it, generally the poorer class which expects publicity money to make up for the shortage in salary paid the police reporter. Others, I am glad to say, will fire a reporter in a minute for this sort of stuff.

Still other police reporters make extra money in more questionable pursuits. They perform as cappers for ambulance chasing attorneys, bail bond brokers, even members of the medical profession. These tradesmen, by the way, frequently see that the police reporter is recompensed for the use of their names in the sensational story of the day. Professional ethics of these gentry forbid open advertising. The capping business is slightly against the law, but minor law does not mean much to a good police reporter. A capper is one who notifies an attorney, a bail bond broker or a physician about a prospective customer. It is easy for the police reporter to get the names and addresses of these potential customers from emergency hospital and police records. There is an automobile accident for instance. A patient or two are brought into the hospital, both drivers report at police headquarters. The police reporter copies down the names of the injured, the names of the drivers and then telephones the attorney giving him the details. The attorney gets in touch with the injured persons right away and talks them into bringing a damage suit against someone. In the case of an ambulance chasing physician the police reporter gives him the names of the injured. As only emergency treatment is given in emergency hospitals there is a good opportunity for the physician to pick up a little business in the form of further treatment. His fees like the attorney's are split with the reporter. Bail bond brokers are notified by the police reporter of persons booked at the jail. The bail bond broker will also give the reporter a split on the fee.

Joel McCrea in 'Manhattan Madness'

Now just because some police reporters are crooked, this is no implication that all of them are tarred with the same feathers any more than because some police officers have the itching palm, all police officers are crooked. But there are crooks among them just as there are in every walk of life.

In a large city on the West Coast there was a police reporter working in cahoots with a police judge in respect to state liquor law violations. The judge usually fined this type of violator the maximum, five hundred dollars. But if the police reporter got to the bootlegger first, things were much easier going. The violator paid the police reporter two hundred dollars, then went into court and escaped with a hundred dollar fine. The police reporter kept one hundred dollars for himself, gave one hundred dollars to the police judge. The bootlegger saved two hundred dollars as it had cost him three hundred dollars instead of the usual five hundred dollar fine. Again everyone was happy—except the taxpayer, and he didn't know anything about it. The judge, with his five hundred dollar fines in a large number of liquor cases, was in strong with the churches and prohibitionists who were responsible time after time for his re-election. In this sort of business, however, one flirts with large but somewhat confining grey walls.

Needless to say the reporter would have been reading the want ads. if his office so much as suspected anything of this nature.

The average police reporter, however, is honest, if not by nature then by preference. He has seen the inside of jails and penitentiaries. He knows what these institutions are like and has not much use for them as habitations.

But it is different when it comes to getting the news. Then the most honest police reporter is capable of practising all the guiles of the game. The law means nothing in the continuous pursuit of the news, either to the reporter, his paper, or to the guardians of the law themselves. The police reporter can almost get away with murder if he is after the news. And God help the police officer whose stern sense of duty compels him to admonish the newsgatherer about breaking the law in the chase. He will probably be shifted "out in the sticks" the next day. A shift "out in the sticks" means the officer has been moved from his pleasant beat to some district where the work is arduous, or monotonous, at any rate unpleasant.

On the other hand the police reporter oftimes helps the police officer in the latter's work. Everyone has heard the time-worn joke of the police officer who had to move the dead horse from University to Second Avenue because he could not spell University. He does not have to move the horse if the police reporter is with him. The reporter will spell University for him. The police reporter, adept at the typewriter, makes out his reports for him at times, does lots of things for the police officer even to putting in a plug for him with the chief. . . .

A police reporter cannot hang around police headquarters all day, day after day, without picking up a few bits of information which he never publishes but which he keeps in the file of his memory. When the time comes he hauls it out and hangs it like the sword of Damocles over the head of some officer from whom he is trying to pry information. It works. If someone other than a reporter attempted to bull-doze the officer in this manner he would get a punch in the nose.

Even the members of the underworld respect the powers of the police reporter. There are a few exceptions, of course, notably the Chicago incident when Jake Lingle died in the dust from a gangster's bullet. But on the whole the police reporter is more or less immune from reprisals.

Often police reporters are called upon by

their editors to take the role of public stool pigeons. During prohibition many editors had the habit of sending the police reporter around to buy drinks at bootlegging dives and then publish his story including the addresses of the dives. Fortunately I was never called upon by my editors to go to such an extreme. I bought the drinks in the dives all right, but my editors never published the addresses. I might say further I bought drinks in many dives of which my editors had no knowledge. I do not know what I would have done if I had been assigned to stool-pigeon work. One must consider a job is a job, still it is a scurvy trick and I would have been between the devil and the deep blue sea. I think now I would have resigned first. Maybe I wouldn't. I do not know. I never had to face the problem. . . .

THE police reporter is also called upon to run down hot tips on automobile accidents immediately they come into his office. Of course, all automobile accidents which make a story come into police headquarters direct, but the reporter must show speed. I suppose some city editors expect the story before the accident occurs. Some printer or office boy would inform the city editor there had been a bad automobile accident at Tulare and A Streets. Promptly my telephone would ring. "Dash out and see what it is", the city editor would demand. He always said, "dash out", never "go out". Well, I would go, not dash, and when I got to the intersection find exactly nothing. I would call the city editor back whereupon he would inform me there must have been an accident, the printer had seen broken glass on the pavement. Broken glass on the pavement, therefore there must have been a couple of people killed. He knew just as well as I did that if anyone had been hurt the accident would have been reported to the police and I would have picked up the story in the routine of chasing the news. He just did not think that way. There were times while I was out on such wild-goose chases something really did break, and I missed it by an hour or so, perhaps missed the chance to swipe a good picture, perhaps missed the chance for a personal interview with the parties concerned. That didn't bother him much; there was broken glass on the pavement.

One often hears in news offices that police reporting is a lazy man's job. Maybe it is and maybe it isn't. A casual glance into the pressroom in police headquarters may show you a poker game in progress, or, on the other hand, it may show you a group of men huddled over their telephones, all dictating at once. At another time you will find the pressroom deserted. It all depends. Perhaps for hours at a time the police reporters do practically nothing. But a call comes in, hell breaks loose and the work starts right now—fast, nerve-wracking work, work that carries on through lunch, through dinner, with never a single moment's let-down, morbid work, the seeing and talking to persons under the stress of the strongest emotions, emotions which strip them down to their primitive selves; wounded, mangled persons, persons suddenly bereft of their dear ones, persons who in a moment of madness killed the thing they loved the most, ordinary persons like yourself with a vision of the rope or the electric chair coming before them like some dread thing out of the darkness. Ever the rush to telephones, ever the hurry to get the story in for the next edition, ever the hunt for new leads, a frantic, high-strung, wild chase for news.

In his search for news the police reporter often comes across what is commonly known as the third degree. The thwack of the rubber hose coming through the closed door of a private room in police headquarters does not mean much to the police reporter. However, he jots it down in his memory so that when the door opens he can get a story on the confession from one of the thwacking officers.

I wanted to get a picture of a man arrested for murder the night before. The captain told me I had better lay off, but I insisted on getting in to talk with him anyhow. You should have seen him. His face looked like the whole squad had walked on it. The squad probably had. Now that picture would have been a nice exposé of police brutality, but I had no proof the man's face was the result of police brutality. The "questioning" officers, no doubt, would have sworn he had fallen against the table, or had tripped and slid on his face on the concrete floor. Furthermore, as a police reporter I would have been through. I would no longer have been the recipient of confidential information which I could not publish, but which would give me the background so necessary to the story I could publish. I did not call the photographer. As a matter of fact, the man told the officers where he had hidden the electric motor he was stealing from a pumphouse when the watchman caught him. He killed the watchman. Police brutality in this instance sent this man to his just doom.

Police, however, are rarely so indiscreet as to work on any man's face. One of their pleasant habits is the tightening of handcuffs around the prisoner's wrists. Statutes have ruled out twisters and other instruments of a torturous nature, but they cannot rule out handcuffs. Handcuffs are a necessary part of any police officer's equipment, but at the same time they can be the cruellest instruments of torture devised by modern man. The handcuffs now used by police officers work on a ratchet device. To tighten the cuffs on a man's wrists, the officer merely presses on the cuffs. One click and they are tightened another notch. As a third degree instrument they are most effective. A few clicks and blood circulation stops. A few more and the cuffs begin to bite into the flesh. The wrists meanwhile swell. I have seen wrists which no more resembled human parts than a piece of hamburger. It is all done in the name of justice.

Is it any wonder the police reporter has bad dreams at night? Honest or crooked, hardened or sentimental, the average police reporter leads a tough life at his work. It is not grand, it is not romantic, neither can it be called adventurous. The police reporter is lucky if he can train his mind to consider it all in a day's work and nothing more.

Do not offer him your last drink of liquor when he comes off duty. He will grab it so quick you will think you dropped the bottle. Liquor gets him away from the things he saw, wrote about and did during the day; it offers him a flight from reality.

Yes, the police reporter drinks.

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' The same characteristics all City Editors have . . .' (*Exclusive. Paramount*)

FACTS
you should know about 'KODACHROME'

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16 mm. and 'Eight'—*Ciné*

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Continuing "Hollywood is Where You Hang Your Head"

wind up every night at one or another of the night spots at two, three, four, and five in the morning. You go to all the class-conscious events of the town from plain parties to banquets for visiting writers from Europe. You get a little mixed-up too. On the one hand, you admire a man who earns three thousand dollars a week for his interest in the proletariat, and, on the other hand, you don't quite know. Is he really interested in the proletariat? If he isn't, what of it, so long as he keeps on donating money to the cause? And so on.

I once believed Hollywood was the one place in America that would pleasantly solve, under Capitalism—which I for one do not want to see substituted by Communism—the problem of keeping a good writer in money without taking away from him whatever it is he has that makes him good. I'm not so sure Hollywood can do such a thing.

Above: Hollywood Boulevard
Below: Another scene from 'Boy meets Girl'

Now, in Russia the Government takes care of its writers, keeping them in money and comfort. That is the sort of thing I, as a writer, would not care to tolerate. One does not like being patronised, even by a government. In Hollywood you allegedly *earn* your money. If it is three hundred dollars per week, you don't feel guilty because three hundred dollars is six or seven times as much as a steel worker earns for doing much harder work; you know a half dozen proletarian writers are earning twice as much, three times as much, and ten times as much. And more power to them, and to Communism too, for that matter. No hard feelings, just so it isn't patronage. Only you can't hang around as long as the proletarians because you don't like not being able to do something with a form you believe is too important to be wasted on tenth-raters and the public they have created. You're in favour of taking the same people and creating a new public. You don't care if the Communists don't care about creating a new public. That's their affair.

Hollywood can be of no use to the American writer (as a writer) because it doesn't need or employ writers. Those in Hollywood now called writers are not writers—they are : (1) idea men, (2) story discussers, (3) plot men, (4) dialogue writers, and (5) if they write at all, collaborators. The first necessity of the writer, privacy, is completely out of the question in Hollywood. By privacy I mean inward aloneness, without which I personally feel no good writing can ever be done.

This does not mean, however, that Hollywood is a place to avoid. On the contrary, every American writer ought to visit the place, take a job at as large a salary as he can get, and hang around until he is fed up. If he never gets fed up, so much the better, or worse, depending on who's judging. If he gets fed up and doesn't dare leave town because he has got used to the money, again so much the better, one way or another.

The chances of doing anything integrated (from one man's point of view) are practically non-existent. You can't run the whole show because they don't do it that way. A picture which you see in fifty-five minutes and which at best is lousy is the result of long, hard work on the part of at least three hundred human beings, two of them sub-geniuses. An artist (as I call them) in order to produce a work of art, of any kind, in any form, *must* run the whole show. There isn't or aren't two ways about it.

For the fun of it, nevertheless, first-rate American writers should not hesitate now and then, or at least between books, to visit the bright little village. It isn't half bad. The people, at their worst, are only ambitious, competitive, sly and stupid. I am very fond of them.

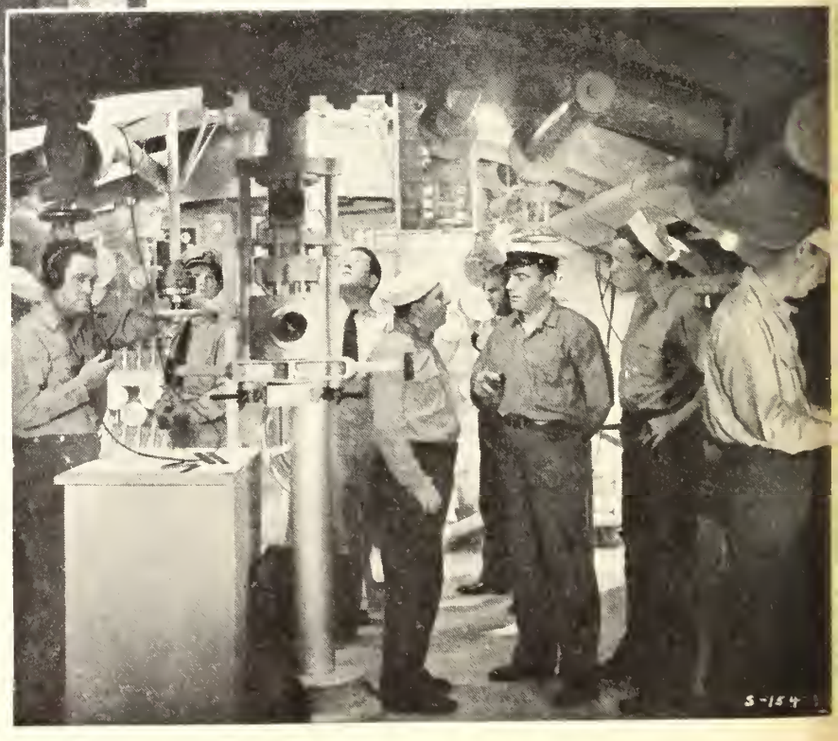
This article first appeared in the weekly 'Time and Tide' to whom we are indebted for permission to reprint.

SUBMARINE D.1—A film of

When America created the commercial cinema she invented the biggest shop window in the world. Shop windows are of several kinds. There are those in which the vendor stuffs every conceivable article and hopes that out of this mass the customer will see what he wants. Another kind is that in which a hat is thrown with studied carelessness into a rarefied emptiness; in this vacuum the passer-by sees what he wants to see. There is also an in-between kind, in which the imagination is allowed some play, but is led along by a reiterated theme. The windows of the latter type score most heavily: with them we associate certain products—leather, books, guns, food and even certain values. Some shops have all three. On the façade of the building is dignified inspiration. On the corners are the in-betweens, and round the corner in the side streets are the junk windows crammed with anything and everything.

The American cinema industry similarly divides its products. It has a noble front of *Pasteurs*, *Dodsworths*, *Bounties*, *Zolas*, *Deeds*—its Class "A" pictures. These are the industry's prestige windows. In its second flight of films, its "B" pictures—*Border Flight*, *And Sudden Death*, *Arizona Raiders*, *Boulder Dam*, *Ceiling Zero*—the real products of America are dramatised. In its "C" pictures, made for the side streets, it puts its anything and everything.

Recently there arrived in this country a series of United States documentaries, representing a new departure in films for America, and following, for the greater part, the model of the British documentary films.



Above: Wayne Morris, Frank McHugh and George Brent

Right: Pat O'Brien talks it over with Frank McHugh

On opposite page: A scene from one of the most realistic and exciting sequences

America's Submarine Navy

It was a surprise to many that hitherto America had had no exact parallel to the documentary. But we shouldn't have been surprised. America has been documenting her national life, articulating her national idiom, giving focus to her national loyalties, drinking her national Coca-Cola, shooting her civil enemies, glorifying her women, showing up her shysters, criticising her politicians, pointing her wit, sounding her accents, describing her railways, her automobiles, her hotels, her skyscrapers, her Yellow Cab Company, her monumental dams, her docks, documenting her history, explaining her geography, vending her hamburgers, flaunting her ice-boxes, gilding her palm beaches, giving a break to her bell-hops and dragging into the world's gaze her lumber men, her soldiers, her sailors, her airmen, her G-men, her divorce facilities and her superior bathtubs.

She has been doing this in her "B" pictures, and she has been showing these films in the public places of every civilised country. She has had little need of documentary. Here was her story, and a very striking one it has proved to be. Most of us in England know the skyline of New York though we may be ignorant of the main streets of Manchester; there are few of us who do not avail ourselves of the additions which the United States has made to the English language; not many of us would confuse the Chicago cop with a U.S. marine, though we would be very capable of such an error in Ostend. There are few of us who have not longed for the comfort of America's Trans-Continental Express on a journey to the ends of England, and most of us would be more at home in the Grand Central Station, New York, than in the Joint Station at Perth.

All this amazing conditioning of our thinking and our attitudes, has come through that great deluge of American "B" pictures. The latest and one of the very best is *Submarine* D.1. I now know more about the working of a U.S. submarine than I do about the London Underground.

It is not a glamorous film and it has no stars—only actors. What magnificently honest actors Pat O'Brien, George Brent and Frank McHugh are. As a trio of submarine going sailors, they are perfect. Pat O'Brien has always been safe from the degradations of stardom and Frank McHugh has too good a voice to coo, and has never shown that dangerous symptom, a profile. George Brent, for a little while, was on the danger line, but he has sailed clear—a little grey at the temples, but with his acting ability intact enough to take his place in the world of lumber men, newspapers and submarines. Glamour is represented in this world of dangerously living men only by the flash of Wayne Morris's teeth, but as he is represented as something of an outsider, glamour is quickly relegated to its proper level. As the victim of the flashing teeth, Doris Weston plays a woman, but not much.

THE story of *Submarine* D.1 is the story of the United States submarine navy, the story of science, of bravery, of invention, of resource, of pugnacity and of new worlds conquered. It is propaganda in the widest sense, not merely for the U.S. Navy, but for America, and for the qualities of American life and for the values which America holds most dear. Behind this articulation of the more intangible qualities of living in a U.S. service, there is the highly detailed description of the facts of American submarines. Three times the slight plot is held up while the immediate action and humour describes the working parts of a submarine, the technique of submerging and the methods of rescue. Each of these sequences is admirably informative without becoming dull. The toughness of Pat O'Brien and the humour of Frank McHugh keeps them very much alive.

Released in May, 'Submarine D.1' is a Warner Bros. Film directed by Lloyd Bacon and starring Pat O'Brien, Frank McHugh, George Brent and Wayne Morris.

★ ★

There are few of our documentary directors who could claim for their films more lucid exposition than the sequence describing the rescue tower. Here is a film which these directors should see before next they expound on the place of the actor in realist films. It is one of the happiest fusions of realist material and studio actors. The subject was a gift to director Lloyd Bacon, for the submarine service offers legitimate catastrophe in every odd dive. But he has steadily kept the legitimacy of his drama to the fore. None of his actors suffers inwardly for the sins of others. The action is objectified in ships and seas and common mortality. The excitements are physical excitements, and the deaths the ends of brave men who go to the U.S. heaven for pioneers.

To this frontier of science and engineering Lloyd Bacon brings all the excitements which his predecessors brought to the plains and the deserts. Pat O'Brien is just as deft with an air compressor as W. S. Hart was with a six-shooter. George Brent shoots just as nifty a torpedo as Tom Mix ever did a .303.

Times change, and the shop window is altered to suit the passers-by, but still the same job is being brilliantly done. America is telling the world.

Thomas Baird

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WAR DECLARED!

Kettner's Restaurant, Soho

BRITISH EXHIBITORS MOBILISE against HOLLYWOOD

W. F. N.'s Special Investigator reports the first stages of war in filmdom.

A SILENT civil war is raging in filmdom. Thrust and counter-thrust, determined offensive and stubborn defence is spreading the battle over a wide front.

On one side a cabal of film tycoons; on the other a quasi-democratic group which, in the manner of coalitions, is apt to be split by petty jealousies and ambitions.

The cabal is known as the K.R.S.—the Kinematograph Renters' Society. The opposition fights under the Popular Front banner of the C.E.A.—the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

The principal victim, however, will probably be the man in the street as usual. He certainly will be the sufferer if the cabal is victorious.

Propaganda and counter-propaganda have inevitably clouded the vital issues involved, and to understand these it is necessary to trace the history of film renting from the pre-talkie days.

But briefly the main issue is this—

Whether the average cinemagoer is to continue to see two big feature pictures for the price of his seat or be offered instead either one good and one indifferent picture, or, in some cases, two bad ones.

In the pre-talkie era all films were booked to cinemas at a flat price which varied according to the picture. The only exceptions to this rule were an occasional super-epic which was road-shown, i.e., shown in legitimate theatres or halls at fixed time performances.

The first talkies were, if only for their novelty value, in the super-epic class and could claim, and get, road-shown terms—that is, a percentage of the gross takings for the renter instead of a pre-arranged fixed rental. Once finally installed by the talkies, the percentage system was never repealed.

Costs of film hire rose, but the cinema prices to the public did not. In other words, the producer and distributor of the pictures got more of the gravy, the exhibitor less. Then with the success of the talking picture came the big cinema building boom of 1931–37 which resulted in there being three cinemas where before there was one.

Competition grew fierce, and bigger and better programmes had to be offered by rival cinemas to attract audiences. Two big features, and possibly a stage show in addition to a news-reel, cartoon and organ interlude became common.

In 1936, however, the K.R.S. decided that the public was getting too much for its money. It didn't say so in those terms. It declared that film programmes were too long. An attempt was made to limit programmes to 3¼ hours. It failed, within the K.R.S. itself because several members at that time owned theatres and opposed the move; and outside the K.R.S. because of technical difficulties due to stage shows and other such things.

So another idea was born—the present scheme to grade pictures into two classes, "A" and "B"—in theory the "A" films to be those of top entertainment value, and the "B" films the routine programme pictures.

Under this scheme, just being put into operation, all "A" films must be booked on a percentage basis, and two "A" pictures may not be played together in one programme. Nor could they be, as no cinema could afford to give away so great a proportion of its total takings. The public in other words must not be offered more than one top-class picture in one programme. "B" pictures, however, may be booked at a fixed flat rate.

But who is to decide which films are "A" and which "B"?

H.M. Government wisely decided, during their examination of the industry in connection with the Films Act, that it was impossible to classify films in terms of entertainment value. Not so the K.R.S. The movie moguls of that self-constituted trust decided that they could and would so grade them. To do this most satisfactorily they elected to meet weekly over the luncheon table at Kettner's restaurant, noted Soho theatrical rendezvous.

A tentative suggestion on the part of the C.E.A. that a joint committee of renters and exhibitors should be set up to sit as jury was brusquely rejected. The K.R.S. felt quite competent to assess impartially the merits of its own product.

BUT more startling developments were to come. The Film Star Chamber did not care for "nosey parker" curiosity as to their procedure. They decided not to disclose the result of their weekly inquests. As a result of

this remarkable decision an exhibitor is not to know whether a film is classed as "A" or "B" unless he takes the salesman's word for it. A highly dangerous procedure.

To avoid unwelcome competition the K.R.S. have decided, too, arbitrarily to arrange among themselves the release dates of their various productions. To the exhibitor this has the appearance of a Machiavellian attempt calculated to deprive him of good pictures at the very times that he most needs top-line attractions to lure his patrons from other pleasures. For, says he, it is extremely unlikely that the K.R.S. members will offer of their best in the summer off-season when the returns are less likely to be as comforting to the eye as in dank November or chilly January. And yet top-line attractions are necessary to the cinema in summer, for nothing less will successfully rival the multitudinous pleasures of seaside and rural pastimes.

True, reasons Mr. Exhibitor, there may be a supply of pictures rated as "A". But will they be really in the "A" class or merely seasonably promoted "B's"?

In the view of some cinema proprietors it may well be said later of the summer of 1938, "What so rare as an 'A' in June?"

But there is another and, to some minds, more serious aspect of this café conference arrangement of release dates which may merit the attention of those numerous M.P.'s who so stoutly took up cudgels not long since on behalf of British film production. Dare it be suggested that the British films on the renters' books will be offered for the off-season dates? As "A" pictures, of course.

"Look what we are doing for British production", the warm-hearted American magnates may boast. "Why we are grading British films in the 'A' class just like the best of our own."

Another development of the situation is the suggestion of a clearing house where all contracts would be vetted by the Film Star Chamber in order to make sure that two "A" films were not booked together.

And so, as in the modern practice, without a formal declaration of war, the hostilities have begun.

The K.R.S. barons maintain with conscientious conviction the Christian justice of their cause. They say:—

(1) Film programmes are too long and for the good of public and trade (exhibitors included) they must be shortened. One feature is enough for the English public, says the K.R.S.
(2) Two good features in one programme are uneconomic. The filmgoer is getting much too much for his money.
(3) The K.R.S. is well qualified to judge the standard of its own pictures for all parts of England.
(4) There is a shortage of films and this renders the two-feature programme policy impracticable.
(5) The cost of film production is rising, due partly to higher labour costs, and partly to an ever growing public demand for better and better entertainment.

The coalition opposition under the C.E.A. banner, made up of countless independent exhibitors and supported by the big circuits, retorts:

(1) That the public are accustomed to and demand an adequate return for their money and will desert the cinemas if programmes fall off in entertainment value.
(2) That the renters cannot and will not be impartial in classifying their own films.
(3) That the grading policy at best means inflicting one bad picture on the public for every good one even supposing all the "A" films are good, which they are not.
(4) That only 1½% of the increased cost of picture production can be attributed to rising labour costs. 98½% is due to extravagance and the absurd fees paid to executives, stars, directors, writers and producers.
(5) That the K.R.S. is trying to make British filmgoers pay for Hollywood squandermania instead of reorganising its production on a sane basis.
(6) That, since American representatives are the backbone of the K.R.S., British films will not get a fair deal and will be placed in the "B" category except for off-season bookings.
(7) That the K.R.S. Americans here are practising monopolistic methods for which they would be indicted under United States laws.
(8) That there is no shortage of pictures that justifies these dictatorial methods.
(9) That the whole scheme is a device to squeeze the British market dry since it is to this country that Hollywood looks for its profits. Already £10,000,000 a year is taken out of the British market by the American producers.
(10) That film hire in America is more than 10% cheaper than it is in Great Britain.
(11) That the American public has killed a high pressure campaign staged by Hollywood to force single feature programmes.

THE public, who is in this case the body over which the rival forces are fighting, knows little or nothing of the tactics being pursued or of the leaders on each side. Let us throw some light on them.

The K.R.S., whose offices are by a significant coincidence in the old Bank of Italy premises in Old Compton Street, is made up of most of the film renters—and most of

Joe Friedman

D. E. Griffiths

Ralph Hanbury

them are American. The president, annually elected, is this year an Englishman—dapper David E. Griffiths, head of First National Pictures. But since the First National output is not the largest or, at least in the view of some, the most distinguished, he could be described as being rather in the position of a General Franco, a figurehead dominated by his foreign "volunteers."

Strong man of the caucus is Generalissimo Samuel Eckman, shrewd chief of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in England. An American, he is an astute politician, a brilliant strategist. Next at the secret luncheon table are bull-necked Max Milder, also American, chief of Warner Brothers, First National's elder brother, and soft-spoken Murray Silverstone, United Artists' leader. An able negotiator from the United States, Tycoon Silverstone is a mild-mannered little fellow, a tactical genius with a velvet tongue. Vital, energetic, bespectacled Joseph Friedman of Columbia, is a useful addition to the alien brains trust, and last but not least of the American con-

Sam Eckman

Murray Silverstone

Max Milder

J. C. Graham

tingent, judicial J. C. ("Daddy") Graham lends a benevolent air to the gathering. Of the Englishmen the most notable in forceful obedience to his U.S.A. chiefs is Ralph Hanbury, boss of R.K.O. Radio Pictures Ltd., who, aside from President Griffiths, is the only native-born son of British soil among the upper hierarchy, if we except paid Secretary Frank Hill, curly-headed, pince-nez wearer with the manner of a fussy but self-confident medico—the Signor Gayda or Mussolinic mouthpiece of the Kettner caucus.

These then comprise the war council of the renters, high command in their cigar-scented and be-waitered G.H.Q.

Cognoscenti will note some empty chairs around the luncheon table. Particularly surprising is the absence of gentlemanly Francis Harley, managing director of Twentieth Century Fox, whose company some years ago withdrew from the K.R.S., disputing their policy and methods. Also absent is Scots solicitor John Maxwell, a veritable film jack-of-all-trades, since he represents producing, renting and big-time exhibiting organisations.

A pioneer of British films, he controls the British International Studios at Elstree, the distributing agency, and the Associated British Picture Corporation which not only distributes films but owns over 400 theatres in this country. The third most notable absentee is fiercely independent veteran C. M. Woolf, whose film career was seemingly terminated with his resignation from the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, but who burst into full bloom again when he formed and took charge of General Film Distributors who now not only handle the Gaumont-British output but also the long list of pictures produced by Universal in Hollywood. Other "non-playing" renters include Pathé and Butchers.

The disaffection of Messrs. Harley, Woolf and Maxwell, and the other aforementioned dissentients from the K.R.S. phalange knocks a serious breach in the otherwise iron front; for do not Twentieth Century Fox control all the Shirley Temple pictures, the new Gracie Fields series, the famous Darryl F. Zanuck musicals starring Sonja Henie, Alice Faye and that rising young fan idol Tyrone Power? While to Mr. C. M. Woolf falls the unquestionable pleasure of selling the Deanna Durbin epics which must be among the biggest money-spinners in the current market, as well as the Hitchcock pictures, the Jessie Matthews' musicals, the Will Hay comedies and many other first-class films. Then there are John Maxwell's productions with Charles Laughton as the ace star.

None of these films will be subject to the "A" and "B" grading unless the K.R.S. generously decides to label other people's properties as well as its own.

Spearhead of the mixed army holding the line against the attack of the K.R.S. is C.E.A. President Ken Nyman, and his able aides-de-camp, rotundly genial C.E.A. General Secretary W. R. Fuller, a rosy complexioned lawyer whose fame as a subtle negotiator has long been recognised throughout the trade, and the London and Home Counties Branch Secretary, Arthur Taylor.

But the shock troops are headed by dynamic Arthur Jarratt, Gaumont-British film-taster and executive; rebel general John Max-

well; young Sidney L. Bernstein, whose Granadas span the South; bluff Major Gale, untiring champion of the little exhibitor; Theo Fligelstone, who knows better than others the small theatre problem; ardent flat booker Teddy Hinge, vice-president of the C.E.A.; Yorkshire exhibitor Charlie Metcalfe, tireless fighter on the Films Bill; and Glasgow's plump twinkling wisecracker Alex B. King.

Their first counter offensive has been a manifesto calling on all exhibitors to book only "B" pictures—if any.

And the "if any" is no Grouchoism. For has not Generalissimo Eckman stated openly, and possibly cynically, that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer will not make any "B" pictures? Thus, with sagacious precautionary forethought, has Mr. Eckman defined the entertainment value of all his studio's forthcoming productions including those on which work has not yet been started.

Maestro Samuel Goldwyn, recent visitor here and power in United Artists, while whole-heartedly favouring the K.R.S. policy, was more disarming than colleague Eckman on the question of "B" pictures. In answer to a Press probe he cracked back, "There is no need to worry about the supply of 'B' pictures. Why, £200,000 is often expended to make an 'A' picture and it turns out to be a 'B'." But he neglected to say whether the K.R.S. in London would ever class a £200,000 production as a "B" picture even if the public went further and deemed it "B.A".

It is indeed the very fact that £200,000 is nowadays by no means an unusual total of expenditure on a picture that is one of the principal complaints of the exhibitors who feel that the results do not always justify the spending of so astronomic a sum. Critics of Hollywood maintain that these colossal costs are primarily the producers' fault, for those great men would rather pay exorbitant sums to borrow established stars, writers and directors than go to the trouble of developing new talent. In the end, it is argued, inter-company rivalry for the services of top-liners benefits nobody—not even the people for whose services there is so great a demand—for in most cases the person is under contract to one firm for a comparatively low figure and his employer pockets the difference between this and the price he gets from the borrower. Moreover, in the scramble all sense of proportion is lost and fees rise away beyond justifiable proportions.

WE have been shown that there are gaps in the K.R.S. ranks. But do not let it be thought that the C.E.A. forces are not also subject to disarray. The big Odeon circuit, which is closely associated with United Artists, might be described as maintaining an attitude of benevolent neutrality, and there is always a danger of some of the C.E.A. branches or individual members adopting a certain rugged individuality dictated, perhaps, for reasons of personal rivalry or gain.

And so the unseen battle rages back and forth.

The American film barons comfortably separated by the Atlantic ocean from the over-

"the old Bank of Italy premises . . .

. . . now the headquarters of the K.R.S." Does Mussolini's spirit still pervade this building?

watchfulness of their superiors in New York and California, and encouraged by past successes against disunited opposition, have developed a taste for political intrigue which, in the view of some, accords ill with their position as guests of the country in which they conduct their business.

They feel repletely secure around their festive luncheon table. They can, not unnaturally, see no serious obstacle to their victorious and remunerative advance, and the possibility of further loot appears to them gloriously limitless. After all £10,000,000 a year in a business whose turnover is many times this figure appears, comparatively, a mere pittance to send back to America annually, especially when there seems to be so much more to be got for the gentle application of a little additional pressure. Besides, who is to question their tactics? Least of all, surely, their superiors abroad who will derive the benefit.

ONLY a professional astrologer would dare to prognosticate the outcome of the clash. On paper, at least, a small group of determined men would seem to be in a more favourable position than a large and widespread association many of whose members are direct business rivals. Past history, too, seems to favour the K.R.S. for it has emerged victorious before from skirmishes with the C.E.A.

On the other hand the exhibitors on this occasion have really got their dander up and may be expected to show much more fighting spirit than has characterised them in past engagements. Moreover, because they so happily find themselves in the position of champions of the public's entertainment, they have a heaven-sent platform plank.

Besides the exhibitors do on this occasion really seem to be fighting for their lives. The new grading scheme does not stop short at the weekly programme. It is designed to obtain percentage rates for Sunday bookings, second and third run showings, and children's matinees, all of which previously fell within the range of fixed price bookings.

The exhibitor sees himself being butchered to make a Hollywood holiday and he is no willing sacrifice. Compromise appears an impossibility—at least at this stage. The struggle has all the earmarks of turning into a fight to the death. It really all depends on whether the exhibitors can really unite or not.

If they can agree then it seems probable that the renters will be forced to climb down. If they fail to do so—*Vae Victis.*

The little men and women whose modest bobs pay for the entire industry are unaware of the struggle that is being so silently and yet so bitterly fought out in their very midst, and in any case they will not be deeply interested. But when they wake up the rape of their entertainment may be a *fait accompli* and they will have to grin and bear it. The customer is always wrong.

If the cinemagoer, like the exhibitor, could organise his forces and bring the matter to the attention of Parliament . . . but the K.R.S. would dismiss this unpleasant unreality for the horrid nightmare that it is. No dictators worthy of the name would consider even momentarily such an absurd suggestion.

No, the exhibitors will have to fight the public's battle as well as their own. The public should wish them luck.

FILMS

Robert Flaherty WANTS TO SEE AGAIN

"Farewell Again"

"Tol'able David"

WHAT films would I like to see again? Time is very hard on films, so how many would survive another showing I cannot tell, but anyway here is the list.

Birth of a Nation, because it revealed the hitherto undreamed of potentialities of the cinema.

Tol'able David—one of the most sincere pictures ever made in Hollywood.

There is also *Stark Love* by Carl Brown, a Hollywood cameraman who went into the foot hills of Tennessee and made the first dramatic film with real characters I can remember—a forerunner to the grand picture Michael Powell has recently made in the Shetlands (*Edge of the World*).

None of Hollywood's big spectacle pictures do I remember very well, but Von Sternberg's *Underworld* and his best film, *The Case of Lena Smith*, are outstanding. I can also add to the Hollywood list almost every film Raymond Griffith ever made, Chaplin's pictures, of course, particularly his *Gold Rush* and also a certain picture by Lubitsch called *Kiss Me Again*.

More recent pictures from Hollywood are the *Three Cornered Moon*, the *Thin Man*, *Theodora Goes Wild*, *Mr. Deeds Goes To Town*, and *Dodsworth*.

Among the Russian pictures are *Potemkin* and Dovzhenko's *Earth*, which is the best picture I have ever seen.

Among the German films, *Caligari*, of course, comes first. There is also *The Last Laugh* and certain of the old Ufa documentaries, like the "Timber" film.

Of the French films there are René Clair's *Under the Roofs of Paris*, and Feyder's *Crainquebille*, and the more recent and wonderful *La Maternelle*.

Of the British dramatic films Hitchcock's *Blackmail* is memorable. And another more memorable still which I happened to see in India: *Turn of the Tide*. Of the recent British dramatic pictures, *Farewell Again* is the best.

But Michael Powell's *Edge of the World*, because it was made with real people and incorporated so wonderfully the character of the country in which it was taken, will be remembered after the other British dramatic films are forgotten.

Many of the British documentary films made during the past two years I have not yet seen, but of the older ones those I most want to see again are *Granton Trawler*, which had more spume in it than any picture of the sea, *Drifters*, and also one of the best films ever made anywhere at any time, *Night Mail*.

As I said before there are many good documentary films I have not yet seen, but the years won't affect them as it does the dramatic films, so there still is plenty of time.

Above:
"La Maternelle"
Left:
"Granton Trawler"

A YANK at OXFORD

Reviewed by John Grierson

A *YANK at Oxford* has been presented as an important picture. It has been presented with full benefit of what they call a "diplomatic premiere", and the dignitaries of London, with that blind appetite for free shows that so amuses the foreigners, turned out in full force. If *A Yank at Oxford* had been a call to national unity in Westminster Hall, it could not have been so handsomely received. One's first reaction is to wonder how so trifling a work can command the great, for it is like catching the Cabinet with its feet up, deep in the adventures of Augustus D'Arcy of the "Green 'Un". But perhaps there is more in this than meets the eye. I heard someone not without responsibility say he thought *A Yank at Oxford* a huge contribution to Anglo-American friendship, and, at the present time, a vital one. That, of course, would explain everything.

I cannot pretend I did not like the film. The Yank who goes to Oxford, thinking he will show the old place a step or two, is caught in the toils of Oxford's traditions, and a measure of English diffidence is added to his American vitality to make him something, if not all, of an English gentleman. That is the story, and it runs easily and warmly, and one forgets that the alcohol going to one's head is strictly synthetic. On examination, it is, of course, the old ackamarackus with a vengeance, and remembering it in colder blood, I never saw in all my born life such a funny University or such a footling lot of students. Everyone is so desperately serious about winning things, and not being cads, and shaking hands as between white men, and cutting you dead, and, in the last resort, giving up all for one's friend, that I would not be surprised at all if America mistook Oxford for a host of golden daffodils.

On the other hand, and in spite of this spurious schoolboy nonsense, the film goes with a lick, the dialogue is witty and good, and the acting has streaks of real excellence. This is particularly the case with C. V. France's playing of an old and somewhat dithery don, and Vivien Leigh's account of a vamp in a bookshop. Robert Taylor is so much better than his publicity men allow that he ought to sue them for damages. With a whale of a part, he takes it like his own 440, flying. He not only outruns, outrows, outwisecracks and out-sacrifices his lesser brethren of England, but he also—and it makes me a trifle suspicious about Anglo-American friendship—is given every opportunity to out-act them.

M.G.M. has been very skilful about the whole affair. To give Robert Taylor the associated value of winning the Oxford–Cambridge 440, stroking the Oxford boat to victory, and then licking the limeys in everything else, is nice work in star building.

With all this in my mind, I begin to doubt if *A Yank at Oxford* is such terrific propaganda for England after all. There were moments in the film when the leaves of England stirred, and the sun came out, and Oxford's bells and Magdalen's choristers sounded very sweet, and time stood still a little in the fields of England. On each occasion, old and hardened and suspect of original sin as I am, I sat up in my seat, and waited for the English film we were promised to happen. I thought perhaps that where so much age and so much youth were mingled, M.G.M. could not fail to achieve an occasional thin wisp of poetry. But the gaudy chariot of stardom rolled on relentlessly, throwing out its tinkling pennies of action and wisecrack, and a win for Robert Taylor every minute. In spite of all the promise, it is like all the rest of them. The damned thing has no roots, and what is the use of saying otherwise? Will those who see it remember the glimpses of reality, or the slabs of fiction: the choristers, or the wisecracks? Is there enough of England in the glimpses to stir the heart, or is it just the same old story of the magnificent young man and the magnificent young woman, with Oxford providing a decorative background? If so rootless, will the Anglo-American friendship it brings mean anything in a twelvemonth?

But you need not trouble to answer. The cinema does not live on nice distinctions, and M.G.M. or any other film company would not bother, anyway. The real answer I got from a big exhibitor. "I know it's good", he said, "but the worst of it is that Sam Eckman, the salesman, also knows it is good, and what with the diplomatic premiere, he won't take less than 50 per cent". If that price were ever justifiable, I would say, on balance, that M.G.M. had deserved it. The film is a good rollicking piece of filmcraft, and does no one any harm. If it pretends so much to be an epic of England, God save us, who are we to debag it? Oxford has been staring us in the face all the days of movies, and we have not had the wit to use it so well, much less better. I say 'floreant' to Ben Goetz, Sam Eckman and Louis B. Mayer. They will make a packet, and Robert Taylor is a greater gold mine than ever.

FRED ASTAIRE at BLANDINGS CASTLE

Basil Wright reviews 'The Drum', 'A Damsel in Distress' and 'Bluebeard's Eighth Wife'.

How it is typical of us to allow folk from far countries to sing our praises! For a long time now the Americans have devoted a large part of their Hollywood product to cracking us up as White Men and stressing the importance of the Empire. One would like to think that the first inspiration of *The Drum* came to the Korda brothers, not from Mason via Kipling, but from someone like Yankee Daniel Webster, who described so well the theme on which they have built a film. "A power to which, for purposes of foreign conquest and subjugation, Rome in the height of her glory is not to be compared—a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

Oh boy—is that paragraph a grand subject for technicolour, or is it not? C. Aubrey Smith isn't available, unfortunately—but otherwise the atmosphere of *Bengal Lancer* has been re-created to perfection. The white men are ever so white, and the coloured men are for the most part cads—even going so far as to use machine-guns, which simply is not done. The cockneys in kilts have that quaint humour which we all love so much in our Tommies, and the moustachios of the sergeant-major are waxed most furiously.

And the officers—with what grace do they wear their mess uniforms, and with what dignity do they ignore the pipers who pipe in an invisible haggis after dinner! And let us not forget the solitary memsahib, singing blues at her minipiano in the outermost outpost of the North West Frontier, sinister Tokot itself. Tokot, ruled over by Raymond Massey who has usurped the throne from poor little Sabu—already disconsolate enough without his elephant, and only half consoled by a white charger which indeed he rides with a spirit equal to its own. Tokot, where the feast and the dancing girls are but a mask for foulest treachery. Tokot, where the heads of faithful retainers are thrown in through the drawing-room window of the Residency. Tokot, where—well anyway, go and see for yourself.

Hand on heart, I do think *The Drum* is a very silly film; but I also admire its production values enormously. Much of it is exterior, and the most practised eye cannot distinguish between North Wales, Denham, and India itself. The colour is excellent, and so reguar in tone that the cutting is gratifyingly slick and without clashes. And the direction and acting, within their own melodramatic limits, are a great deal better than previous efforts from the same stables. But I would like, as a penny postscript, to suggest that the facts and problems of the Empire are in themselves sufficiently important, exciting, and dramatic to warrant attention from film producers, and that from the point of view of prestige a film on more practical lines would be a more worthy way of spending the money than this pretty extravagant lump-in-throat fantasia on a threadbare and melodramatic theme.

TRUE devotees of the Maestro Wodehouse will agree that no successful translation of the Jeeves-Wooster-Blandings epics into stage or screen terms has yet been achieved. *A Damsel in Distress* comes nearer than most, chiefly because the original story has not been altered; but the quicksilver touch of the novel is still missing, despite Constance Collier's accurate rendering of the Aunt, and Harry Watson's inspired page-boy (how I wish they had interpolated the famous reading from Tennyson's *Maud*—it was made for Master Watson). Moreover, unlike the joyous books of the Master, the film takes far too long to get going; a little drastic cutting in the first three reels would be a big improvement. But the stars will no longer be denied; this is a Fred Astaire film.

Undismayed by the absence of Ginger Rogers, he puts up an original virtuoso act with a large jazz drummer's outfit as the victim of his mercurial toes, teams with Burns and Allen for several comedy dances, and takes Joan Fontaine for a terpsichorean stroll through the ornamental grounds of Totleigh Castle. The man has a natural grace of movement; his nonchalant stroll across the set is as satisfactorily timed as his most complicated routines. His engaging face, a shade in the style of Stan Laurel, radiates a bonhomie which would make the fortune of a less accomplished actor. Like a fresh-caught eel, he slithers happily through the minor musical-comedy complications of the story, only retiring now and then to allow Gracie Allen to swing dumbness into dizzy splendour, while Reginald Gardiner gives a paralysing performance as a perfect servant trying (unsuccessfully) to choke back an impulse to render tenor arias from Italian opera.

It is a pity that the best sequence of the film comes in the middle instead of the end. Everything is a shade anticlimactic after the Fun Fair scene, when the Oompah makes a grand reappearance on a giant revolving floor, and Astaire, Burns, and Allen become *plus surréalistique que les surréalistes* in a hotcha-dance along the distorting mirrors. This sequence is pure Jabberwocky, and beautifully shot and cut. But why must Hollywood always insist on perpetuating the fog-myth? Even among the evening glades Astaire twinkles his feet in a kind of portable mist-cloud, which follows him round like the fluctuating ghost of a St. Bernard. Anyhow, it gives the cameraman a chance for some pretty effects. The music is by Gershwin, and might be better.

LUBITSCH has hit the trail again after his regrettable détour into the Death Valley of *Angel* and *Desire*. His new film has all the elements proper to his art, the elements of *So This is Paris* and the *Marriage Circle*. He has hugged Gary Cooper and Claudette Colbert to his capacious bosom, and invested them with his own insignia of wit to such purpose that we can even accept Cooper as a tough business magnate who always makes a corner in highspeed marriage and divorce. The story is merely about his eighth attempt in that market, during which Colbert knocks him silly and finally re-marries him with the help of a strait waistcoat. Not that the story matters very much; it depends on Lubitsch gags, and Lubitsch embellishments, to say nothing of the fact that Lubitsch is one of the few people who really know about film direction.

Once you accept the lavishing of such abilities on a worthless bit of French-farcery, there is little to complain about and a great deal to enjoy. Never has the machinery of escapism been so cunningly oiled. We are allowed a good deal of globe-trotting, enough daring moments to make us feel mischievous but not naughty, and a whole string of elaborate jokes of the squib variety, with the final pop delayed to the point where one no longer expects it.

True, there are points where wit vanishes, and with it taste—and I for one found some of the mental-home scenes heavy and humourless; but the opening sequence of the film is impeccable—a theme with variations. The theme, an attempt to buy the top portion only of a pyjama suit, is announced majestically and imposingly, and the variations elaborately shower arpeggios and grace notes, with a witty discord occasionally breaking through, until the virtuosity of the whole piece becomes almost hypnotic.

The only real regret about Lubitsch—one which the *argumentum ad box office* can easily counter—is that he has modified his satirical abilities so much, both in terms of technique and intellectual approach, that the sting, if not removed, is virtually unnoticeable.

Perhaps *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* could have been a masterpiece had he been less anxious not to cause us the least discomfort. But why complain about a really comfortable divan?

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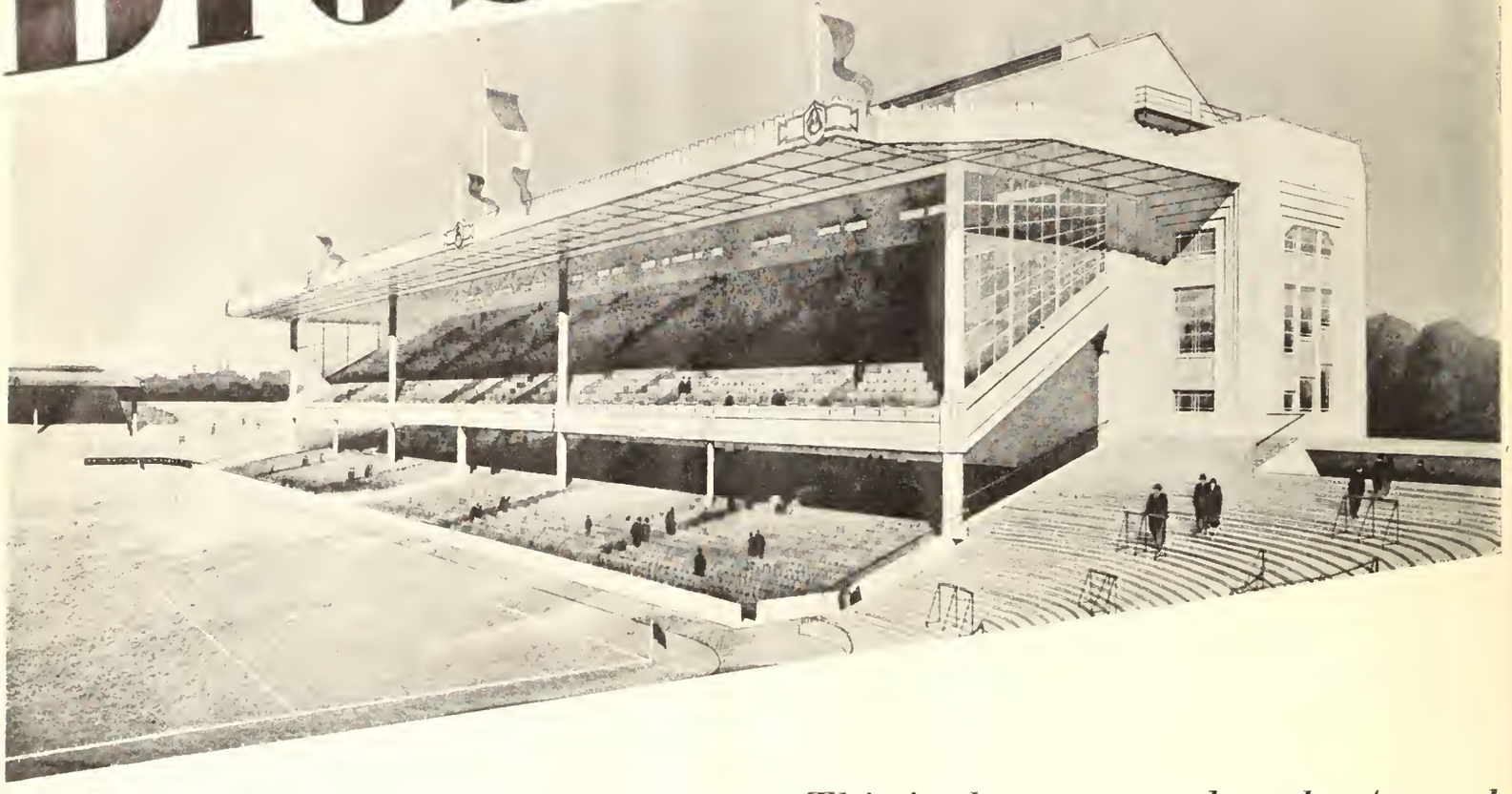

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The MONTH'S RELEASES

THE releases which will attract most attention this month are *The Last Gangster*, starring Edward G. Robinson, and *Fight for Your Lady*, with Jack Oakie in the lead. Whether or not they mean it to be the last of the gangster cycle, M.G.M. have turned out a very polished film in *The Last Gangster*. Edward G. Robinson plays Krozac, a Slav-born racketeer sent to Alcatraz for a term of ten years. While there, his wife learns his true character and goes away with their child, to marry a respectable citizen. On his release, Krozac's former gang pick him up and try to sweat out of him the whereabouts of a tin box he has hidden before serving his sentence. He won't tell, so they kidnap his child and torture him before his eyes. That breaks Krozac and he tells. Freed, he takes the boy home to his former wife, and leaves him there in what he knows to be better hands. On his way out, he is killed, after a grim gun-fight, by an old enemy. Edward G. Robinson plays Krozac convincingly, with Rose Stradner and James Stewart in support.

Fight for Your Lady is performed by a capable cast headed by Jack Oakie, Ida Lupino and John Boles. Smart dialogue, direction full of comedy touches, and spontaneous acting make this the best and most entertaining release of the month. This film will most likely be shown as a second feature, but should not be missed on that account.

Mickey Rooney

The Western of the month is *Thunder Trail*, and one of those rarities, a well-made one. Story good, and action plentiful, with direction well above the normal for Westerns. Charles Bickford has the heavy role, and is well supported by Gilbert Roland and Marsha Hunt. This Western, though made of the usual ingredients, is likely to appeal as much to adults as to children.

Paramount's colour version of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Ebb Tide* relies far too much on its colour and its striking backgrounds to be really satisfactory. Oscar Homolka is perhaps too deliberate in his performance and slows the film down, but Barry Fitzgerald, late of the Abbey Theatre, almost runs away with the picture as a conniving cockney seaman. The film lacks pace, and even Lloyd Nolan's excellent piece of acting as a psychopathic villain scarcely atones for this slowness. *Thoroughbreds Don't Cry* is an exposure of racketeering in the racing world played as a comedy farce. Several young actors—Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland amongst them—are starred with C. Aubrey Smith in a story of the ups and downs experienced in trying to win a big handicap at Santa Anita. *Perfect Specimen* is a crazy comedy with Errol Flynn, Joan Blondell, Hugh Herbert and Edward Everett Horton. Story is of a rich, well-brought-up young man, who leaves a life of luxury to find love and amusement amongst ordinary people. This is not a social problem film but a passably good comedy with good performances by the stars.

Grace Moore fans will know what to expect from *I'll Take Romance* which follows the old formula. The film tells of an American in Buenos Aires who chases an opera singer round the world because she will not fulfil her contract. More grand opera than usual, with Melvyn Douglas and Stewart Erwin in charge of the comedy.

Wells Fargo, Paramount's successor to *The Plainsman* is not by any means so entertaining or well-made as its predecessor. Supposedly a big outdoor spectacle, the majority of the film consists of interiors and from this angle it definitely disappoints. The story traces the history of the Wells Fargo Express Co., which ran mail across the North American Continent. Joel McCrea plays the lead, with Frances Dee as his wife, in this Frank Lloyd production. Another "outdoor" film is *The Barrier*. This is the third edition of Rex Beach's story of a man who kidnaps the daughter of a woman he once loved and brings her up to believe she is a half-breed Indian. The chief assets of the film lie in the scenic backgrounds of Mount Baker National Park and Leo Carrillo, who, luckily, has lots to do and say.

Alcatraz Island is a film about America's penal settlement. Every effort has obviously been made to make the background of prison life as authentic as possible, and from this point of view the film is praiseworthy. In the process, however, the story has been neglected.

From the British studios comes Alfred Hitchcock's newest *Young and Innocent*, starring Nova Pilbeam and Derrick de Marney. Rather naïve, the film contains enough of those subtle tricks which mark Hitchcock's films. The story concerns an unsophisticated young country girl, who gets involved with a young man falsely accused of murder, and her attempts to prove his innocence.

Dope, poison, stabbing knives, poisoned arrows, invisible writing, black cloaks, venomous snakes, a hot-headed Tinker, a sleepy Pedro, a dashing Sexton Blake, a beautiful foreign agent, an arch-criminal, an international gang, fire, false floors, trap doors, no love stuff, and a last-minute rescue from a death, than which there is nothing worse, are some of the ingredients of *Sexton Blake and the Hooded Terror*. If you don't like it, then you must be sophisticated. If this is not the stuff that screams are made on, then we are terribly off-centre. Not that we would mind that, for we always thought that Sexton Blake was the goods, and we would walk miles to hear Tod Slaughter.

MAY RELEASES

The Last Gangster (M.G.M.) * *
DIRECTOR: Edward Ludwig
STARRING: Edward G. Robinson, James Stewart, Rose Stradner
(Reviewed WFN January)

Man Proof (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Richard Thorpe
STARRING: Myrna Loy, Franchot Tone, Rosalind Russell, Walter Pidgeon
(Reviewed WFN March)

Young and Innocent (Gaumont-British)
DIRECTOR: Alfred Hitchcock
STARRING: Nova Pilbeam, Derrick de Marney
(Reviewed WFN March)

Ebb-Tide (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: James Hogan
STARRING: Oscar Homolka, Ray Milland, Barry Fitzgerald, Lloyd Nolan, Frances Farmer
(Reviewed WFN December)

Wells Fargo (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Frank Lloyd
STARRING: Joel McCrea, Bob Burns, Frances Dee
(Reviewed WFN February)

Thunder Trail (Paramount) *
DIRECTOR: Charles Barton
STARRING: Charles Bickford

The Perfect Specimen (First National) *
DIRECTOR: Michael Curtiz
STARRING: Errol Flynn, Joan Blondell
(Reviewed WFN February)

Submarine D-1 (Warner)
DIRECTOR: Lloyd Bacon
STARRING: Pat O'Brien, George Brent, Wayne Morris, Doris Weston

Alcatraz Island (Warner)
DIRECTOR: William McGann
STARRING: John Litel, Ann Sheridan

Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo (20th Cent. Fox)
DIRECTOR: Eugene Ford
STARRING: Warner Oland

Fight for Your Lady (R.K.O. Radio) *
DIRECTOR: Ben Stoloff
STARRING: John Boles, Jack Oakie

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by

H. E. BLYTH

A Yank at Oxford

(Jack Conway—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

Robert Taylor, Griffith Jones, Maureen O'Sullivan, Vivien Leigh.

In about thirty years' time, when Robert Taylor is playing Lionel Barrymore parts, I fancy he will look back on his trip to England as a memorable milestone in his career.

Not because of the multitudes that met him at Waterloo. Nor the girls who fought for his discarded cigarette stubs. But because in *A Yank at Oxford* he made his best film up to that time, proved that a Hollywood star could make a British film and gain, rather than lose, "face", and proved himself beyond the final doubt an accomplished actor.

Taking up that last point first, this is the first time in his career Taylor's part has been more important, in acting requirements, than his mere (what a word about such a creature!) physical presence. The eight writers credited with participation have not evolved a great story, but they have given a simple one a full measure of incident, plausibility, wit, and that attractive warmth which for want of a better word we must call humanity.

Their most daring feat is to make the character played by the god-like Taylor partly unsympathetic. For a time, indeed, he is what young Oxford might well call a cad. He sees a fellow student in disgrace and danger of ruin for something he did not do, while Taylor, the culprit, keeps silence on his guilty secret. The situation arises through Taylor, a bombastic American athlete, coming to Oxford and throwing his weight about.

He learns painfully that Oxford is not impressed. He learns that to win the race is not so important as to win it sportingly. He learns a lot. But that sounds far too "Tom Brown's Schooldays" to give any real idea of the picture's quality.

Where it most brilliantly succeeds is in manipulating the balance so that Britain will laugh at America, America at Britain, and everybody will emerge happy and with national honour unbesmirched.

If there was any deliberate intention of emphasising the "masculinity" of Taylor's personality it has been done with discretion. His admirable physique enables him to play the athletic virtuoso with easy conviction. He runs with style; he rows as though he might well stroke a winning Boat-race crew. Yet with all this athleticism the picture does not fall into the trap of being aggressively hearty. In the same way, there is sentiment about Oxford itself, but again not laid on so that it becomes maudlin (or should I spell it Magdalen in this context?).

To set opposite Taylor in this international combat the producers could not have found a better man than Griffith Jones. The best praise Taylor could have is that he stands up to and gives as good as he gets from this equally handsome, more experienced young English actor. Maureen O'Sullivan is the girl who revolts against, but eventually surrenders to, the charm behind the bombast, and Vivien Leigh gives by far the best screen performance as the kittenish, pouting college flirt with a dull husband in the background. Lesser parts are admirably played by Edmund Gwenn, Peter Croft, Robert Coote, C. V. France and Edward Rigby.

Everybody who took part in this anxious venture—for Metro-Goldwyn's first English picture had to be more than just good—deserves the warmest praise. Their use of the English sports field—and river—for screen thrills is brilliant in itself.

They have made a swift, exciting, amusing picture, with all their Hollywood polish and punch, which will, I am sure, rank with the best films of the year—not just with the best *British* films of the year.

The distinction is the measure of their success.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

I seem less enthusiastic than many about *A Yank at Oxford*. Robert Taylor is an industrious young man; he is one of the workers, one of the toilers in the vineyard. As the Yankee he who takes over Oxford, he may seem representative to the British of what we are really like, and the film may have a great success abroad on that account. The toiling Mr. Taylor is somewhat the victim of the idea of the sketch, and of its general handling, for he must play a brash American youth who finally shows up the Oxford snobs and becomes the hero of the day. Care has been taken in the presentation of the Oxford scene, the customs of the place, the problems of the undergraduates, deans, dons, chimes, and boat races, hazing and romance, and the result is neither very Oxford nor very Yankee; yet it's a cheerful thing which may amuse you.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

The story is built for and around Mr. Taylor and he wins everything there is to win at Oxford. No British graduate has ever been able to do at Oxford what the handsome Bob does—or even at Cambridge, for that matter. But the Yanks will love it because it shows how much better they are than all the tradition in the world can make a Britisher.

When the story opened to introduce a raw, egotistical American youth being sent to Oxford, I thought for a foolish moment that the film would proceed to show how British tradition and British convention would mould him to a sense of modesty. But no. For this film is box-office, and every American will eat it up and ask for more. Whether British audiences will show the same appetite is doubtful. Such a lad as this particular "Yank" at Oxford would not be tolerated for a term.

Incidental thought: What would the Americans think if an Englishman went to Harvard, Yale or Cornell and behaved as this Yank did at Oxford? Would they think it very funny?

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

W.F.N. Selection.

The Front Page	* * *
A Yank at Oxford	*
Jezebel	*
Le Roi S'amuse	*

Other Films covered in this issue:

The Drum

Bluebeard's Eighth Wife (stars reserved)

A Damsel in Distress

The Adventures of Marco Polo (stars reserved)

Mad About Music

Bank Holiday

Bringing Up Baby

La Tendre Ennemie

Nina Petrovna

Generals Without Buttons

Bluebeard's Eighth Wife

(Ernst Lubitsch—Paramount)

Claudette Colbert, Gary Cooper, Edward Everett Horton, David Niven.

What a capricious fatality pursues *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, which presents, just at this particular phase of history, Vienna as a place of honeymoon bliss and for comic effects harps upon the long, difficult spelling

of Czechoslovakia! If you want to sleep at nights, says Claudette Colbert, as the enticing heroine, to Gary Cooper, as the magnificent gallant, just spell Czechoslovakia backwards. Somehow one can't fancy the idea of Czechoslovakia as a soporific. The picture dates a bit in other ways, too, and seems in this epoch of wild and loony films somewhat in the style of more formal farce, with all that cautious, elaborate fixing of a comic situation. Miss Colbert and Mr. Cooper themselves are jaunty, look their best, and have their bright lines and their occasional spasms of high spirits, which include tussles and a spanking.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Ernst Lubitsch has slipped the boxing gloves over his brass knuckles again and is tapping out a few more Lubitsch touches in *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*. Although it's not a bad comedy by our current depressed standards, it has the dickens of a time trying to pass off Gary Cooper as a multi-millionaire. Put seven divorced wives behind Mr. Deeds, each with a $50,000-a-year settlement, and it becomes pretty hard to believe that he's just a small boy at heart—which is the principal charm of Paramount's gangling hero. In these days it's bad enough to have to admire millionaires in any circumstances; but a millionaire with a harem complex simply can't help starting the bristles on the back of a sensitive neck.

But here is Mr. Cooper as the grinning tycoon with seven discarded matrimonial enterprises on his books and Claudette Colbert, the indigent marquis's daughter, as the lady who declines to become merely No. 8. There are a few captious sequences, enlivened by the supporting presence of Edward Everett Horton, Herman Bing, David Niven and Warren Hymer, but they do not entirely compensate for the arid and barren stretches which not even Lubitsch could make yield light comedy. It all ends in an asylum, with Bluebeard in a strait-jacket, which proves they're always getting the wrong man: the one they should have grabbed was the chap who picked Mr. Cooper for the part.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

The Adventures of Marco Polo

(Archie Mayo—United Artists)

Gary Cooper, Sigrid Gurie, Binnie Barnes, Basil Rathbone, H. B. Warner.

Marco Polo is a big Italian boy who sets out for China and the vast kingdoms of Kublaï Khan. He looks a lot like Gary Cooper but there is something strangely unimpassioned and preoccupied about him. He becomes involved in a great many adventures which somehow never seem quite dangerous enough. He is photographed against expansive panoramas that are about as impressive as a footstool when the camera finally closes in on them. To be specific, *Marco Polo* is a cold, unglamorous show, and Producer Goldwyn, Actor Cooper, and Director Mayo are great disappointments to me. I don't know what's the matter with me, but I like my great big pictures great big.

—Katharine Best, *Stage*

The Front Page

(Lewis Milestone—United Artists)

Adolphe Menjou, Pat O'Brien, Mary Brian, Edward Everett Horton.

It is hard to believe that Lewis Milestone, director of *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Front Page*, should recently have been responsible for *Paris in Spring* and *Anything Goes*, two mediocre little musicals which anyone of average ability could have made; who would think, while watching them, that their director was a man of whose ability Miss Lejeune wrote, nearly eight years ago now,

"Spell Czechoslovakia backwards . . ."

"It seems to me that here is a talent which may very well develop into the first cinema genius of America's next decade."

Milestone's failure to live up to his earlier promise seems symbolical of Hollywood's recent progress; pictures have become slicker, more polished, more adroit, but they have lost their punch. Purity campaigning in America has no doubt got much to do with it. *The Front Page* would be condemned by the Hays organisation of to-day; *All Quiet*, on the other hand, would be banned in half a dozen countries in Europe. *The Front Page* was coarse, callous, and utterly unmoral. From its opening shot of a hangman lackadaisically testing out his gallows to its brilliantly cynical curtain, it contained only three characters who were not completely soulless, and of these three one was a prostitute and another a murderer; it was the first of a series of pictures which taught us that the American newspaperman is the lowest form of animal life, several grades below the Australian aborigine.

Yet for all this it was a grand piece of work, magnificent in its force, characterisation and construction. "Milestone's cutting in *The Front Page*," wrote Paul Rotha in *Celluloid*, "is as good as anything that has been done in the Russian cinema", and it will be long before we can forget those telephones and that roll-top desk, and that company of reporters, waiting to cover the hanging in their dingy room above the deathhouse. America's deplorable social evils—gangsters, graft and a yellow press—have yet at least one virtue; they have given to its film-makers some magnificent material.

—H. E. Blyth, *World Film News*

The Drum

(Zoltan Korda—London Films)

Sabu, Raymond Massey, Valerie Hobson, Roger Livesey, Desmond Tester.

The setting is the North-West Frontier, and there is scarcely a single scene which is not wildly picturesque. The mountain landscapes are magnificent, the architecture is fabulous, the Oriental characters are uniformly superhuman, and even the English, in spite of the necessary comic relief that they must occasionally provide, can be relied upon to play up to the setting and to parade or fight with entirely appropriate gestures.

The effect depends, of course, almost entirely on the photography, and on the direction of Mr. Zoltan Korda. It is difficult for the casual spectator to understand what it is that makes such an episode as the fight in which the film culminates so exciting, but perhaps the success of the film as a whole really depends on a quite simple though uncommon quality—its consistency. The single aim is directly pursued, the resources of the cinema are concentrated, and the effect of what is really no more than reasonable discretion is at moments overwhelming.

—*The Times*

The Drum probably breathes the authentic British military spirit better than anything yet seen on the screen. A. E. W. Mason's story, set on the North-West Frontier, tells of a treacherous tribe leader, a fugitive Indian boy prince, and the rescue of a Resident's small garrison after fierce fighting.

Strong point of the picture is the spectacular side, in glowing Technicolour that is never garish. The marches through majestic mountain country to the bagpipes; the Eastern crowds in the outpost town, and the battles are vividly handled on a large scale. Although the climax rather loiters, and the humour is confined to a few gleams, the note of gentlemanly gallantry lends dignity to the most exciting moments.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

Jezebel

(William Wyler—Warner Bros.)
Bette Davis, Henry Fonda, George Brent, Margaret Lindsay.

Jezebel is an example of the latest sort of movie, that which tries to present a genuine picture of a complex individual character. Almost any sort of authenticity survives more easily on the screen than this : whether it derive from historical accuracy, observation of modern social conditions, or merely from the straightforward exploitation of dynamic and desirable persons. Perhaps a medium which depends on movement and has to keep moving is more naturally suited to the panorama than the portrait. In the close dissection of character there may be something incurably static, depending on silence, intimacy, leisurely tempo. And then a film like *Jezebel* comes along to suggest the possibility of revealing character as effectively as in a good novel or play. Much of the credit is due to Miss Bette Davis, who is a real actress; her impersonation of Miss Julie, a spoiled, wealthy, imperious *belle* in the New Orleans of 1852, is so positive and alive that her first appearance has all the excitement of a stage entry. As the film unrolls her character grows, gradually and inevitably; her cruelty, her pride, her egotism, her genuine love for Preston (Mr. Henry Fonda), her inability to give in to him even when she really wants to, her desperate inner loneliness and emptiness. Though she makes no concessions to sentimentality, anything that happens to this girl is our concern. The script and William Wyler's direction see to it that what does happen is in keeping. His re-creation of the old French town with its periodic scourges of yellow fever, and of the negro plantation, Halcyon Farm, with its soft southern evenings and its singing—all this is excellently done; but it is a sort of excellence which Clarence Brown and other directors have taught us to expect. It is rarer to find the various threads of the drama—North *v.* South, the aristocratic contempt for business, the ethics of the duelling ground—so skilfully handled and so constantly shot with beauty. *Jezebel* is a decorative film; but its most decorative moments reinforce the drama. The ball at which Julie insults New Orleans conventions by appearing in a red, instead of a white, dress is a charming spectacle in itself, and its easy charm heightens the effect of Julie's brazen daring. There is a moment when she flutters impulsively downstairs while the butler's taper, lighting the chandelier, moves gravely across the screen in the opposite direction: a pattern too significant to be unintentional. *Jezebel* is an imperfect film; Mr. Fonda cannot put much life into the hero, and Julie's final gesture of self-scarifice is as novelettish as such Hollywood atonements are apt to be; but elsewhere one welcomes the attempts to break away from the usual slickness and sentimentality.

—Peter Galway,
The New Statesman and Nation

Mad About Music

(Norman Taurog—Universal)
Deanna Durbin, Herbert Marshall, Gail Patrick, Arthur Treacher.

Just a year ago Deanna Durbin—now 15—arrived, administering a dumbfounding shock of admiration. In her third picture this delightfully natural young person is, if possible, better than ever. Her flute-like voice is heard in Gounod's "Ave Maria"—and in three comparatively lamentable popular concoctions; and her gaiety is a great asset to a story rather below her previous couple in quality, though still good. It is, in fact, on a lower mental level, being about a schoolgirl in Switzerland with an imaginary explorer father. She grabs Herbert Marshall and makes him play the parent. Embarrassments are good, though foreseen. Gail Patrick plays a film-star mother, with ballyhoo scenes and some chokey sentimentality. A bemused synthetic yarn, but the Durbin child is unique. There is none like her, none; and the velvety Marshall voice and manner are at their best.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

Two things I cannot have too much of—Disney cartoons and Deanna Durbin films. But I foresee trouble for Deanna and her sponsors. The delightful 15-year-old child with the dancing eyes and smile of an angel has been put on a pedestal of heavenly innocence in her first two films. How to get down to mundane characterisations is the problem. In *Mad About Music* her wings are moulting. She is telling lies like a trouper. The metaphor may be twisted, but the spelling is right, for this film, more than the other two, reveals that she is really a great little actress.

Not so spirited as 100 *Men and a Girl*, the new film is built on quieter, more solid lines, presumably to show how well Deanna can act. It may not be considered quite as good as its predecessor, but the difference hardly matters.

—A. Jympson Harman, *The Evening News*

Critical Summary.

Deanna Durbin, it seems, has survived the considerable handicap of having made of her first picture a sensational success. In the film world many have started at the bottom and climbed to the top of the tree, and not a few have reversed the process, by starting at the top and gradually working their way down. This was the fate which was confidently predicted for Deanna Durbin, firstly after "Three Smart Girls" and then after "100 Men and a Girl", but it has not yet overtaken her. "Mad About Music" is not quite so good as the other two, but it is amply good enough. Her producers, however, must be greatly concerned about her future. Spontaneity and freshness, so rare in the cinema, are quickly lost in the commercial atmosphere, and in about a year she will be old enough for romance. We would almost rather that she retired now to the Metropolitan, before Hollywood had a chance to spoil her.

Bank Holiday

(Carol Reed—Gainsborough)
Margaret Lockwood, Hugh Williams, John Lodge, Rene Ray.

Without any preliminary trumpets, blah-blah, or other advance noises, a grand British picture has slipped into town. It is *Bank Holiday*, a tragi-comedy about people like us. Most of the action takes place in a South of England seaside town during a Bank Holiday week-end. Twelve people, most of them strangers to one another, are thrust by chance into the dramatic saucepan and well and truly stirred. The result is a dish that should be to everybody's taste, for it contains all the most popular flavours. The story is slight, but it is not the story that matters. The dozen characters—each so skilfully portrayed—are what gives this picture its quality. Looking over the credit titles, I fail to see the name of Betty White, the young woman who cast the film. She deserves as much credit as anyone else responsible for the excellence of *Bank Holiday*, a film that everyone in these islands should see.

—Moore Raymond, *The Sunday Dispatch*

The film has been made by one of our younger British directors, Carol Reed, who is beginning to do most things well, because he has learnt from the start to do them simply. *Bank Holiday* is an improbable story which has been given, through the truth of its detail, an air of almost indisputable authenticity. The whole film reeks of August Bank Holiday at one of our less exclusive beach resorts; the tired children, the crowded side shows, the grim rows of boarding houses, the sea washing up almost apologetically against the boots of Bexborough's massed sleepers. The early London scenes, too, are sensitively done, and the actors, on the whole, give us the sort of people we know and can believe in. I liked especially Margaret Lockwood as the girl, John Lodge as the husband, and the whole of Wally Patch's Cockney family; but best of all I liked Wilfrid Lawson's three-minute sketch of a Sussex County police-sergeant, slow, unruffled, faintly cynical, and timeless as the quiet world around him.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary

When at Christmas two years ago a small and unimportant little English picture called "Midshipman Easy" appeared unobtrusively in the West End there were points about it which made one glance at the programme to find out the name of its director; and since then Carol Reed has never looked back. "Midshipman Easy" was followed by "Laburnum Grove", an excellent comedy with Edmund Gwenn and Cedric Hardwicke, and then came "Talk of the Devil," a thriller which received many very favourable notices for its ingenuity and originality. And now "Bank Holiday" has eclipsed them all, being singled out by several critics as the best picture of a week which produced no less than fourteen releases, including two of Hollywood's most lavish and costly productions. Carol Reed, it seems, has arrived.

Bringing up Baby

(Howard Hawks—RKO Radio)
Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, Charlie Ruggles.

Blonde, vacant-eyed Miss Lombard has a rival. The intense Miss Hepburn of the "rocking-horse nostrils", the quivering mouth and the pent-up energy dithers through a picture called *Bringing Up Baby*, and proves that she can beat most of the screen's comediennes at their own game. In *Sylvia Scarlett* Miss Hepburn showed that she could enter into the spirit of knockabout; in *Stage Door* she slyly revealed an ability to put over bright lines with a poker face. *Bringing Up*

Baby gives her the freedom of farce, and she revels in it, tossing dignity to the winds in sequences which require her to slide over cliffs and plunge into rivers, swing on ladders, and parade—the back of her gown having been torn off—in her scanties.

It was an unexpected pleasure to find this such an amusing film. These crazily bright modern comedies have been wearing thin lately. *Bringing Up Baby*, an exercise on the girl-chases-man theme, has enough new ideas to make one feel that there is plenty of life in the old plot yet.

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

This is a farce which you can barely hear above the precisely enunciated patter of Miss Katharine Hepburn and the ominous tread of deliberate gags. In *Bringing Up Baby* Miss Hepburn has a role which calls for her to be breathless, senseless and terribly, terribly fatiguing. She succeeds, and we can be callous enough to hint it is not entirely a matter of performance.

After the first five minutes of this new show—we needed those five to orient ourselves—we were content to play the game called "the cliché expert goes to the movies" and we are not at all proud to report that we scored 100 per cent against Dudley Nichols, Hagar Wilde and Howard Hawks, who wrote and produced the quiz. Of course, if you've never been to the movies, *Bringing Up Baby* will be all new to you—a zany-ridden product of the goofy farce school. But who hasn't been to the movies?

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

Critical Summary

As will be seen from above, the critics were by no means in agreement over Katharine Hepburn's ability to play in crazy comedy, partly, no doubt, because there are many who feel that crazy comedy has had its day and partly because Miss Hepburn has always been a subject of controversy. There are those who feel that she has never fulfilled the promise shown in "Morning Glory", though personally we are inclined to think that she was seen at her best in the name part of "Alice Adams", which stands, with "Ah, Wilderness", as one of the best small town pictures that Hollywood has ever made. Miss Hepburn, in her time, has unwisely antagonised more than one critic, with the result that when, as in this case, she attempts an innovation, she can hardly hope that it will be received with easy tolerance and forbearance if it is not altogether successful.

Le Roi S'amuse

(Pierre Colombier—French)

Victor Francen, Raimu, Gaby Morlay, Elvire Popesco.

Seldom has there been a saucier, more truly French essay in the risky than *Le Roi S'amuse*. As a piece of satire it is brilliant in every way. Its shafts of wit, its open mockery of humanity's foibles and follies are priceless. It attacks not only royalty but democracy, not only political jobbery but snobbery. It should be compulsory for every Member of Parliament to see it not once but twice.

A thoroughly enjoyable film, this, but only for grown-ups or for those who refuse to grow older than forty-five. Its burlesque is never unkind or savage, but as entertaining in its ridicule as it is possible to be. It has rapid action and joyous skill in character-drawing, and its flirtatious foreign monarch, although not too satisfactorily played by Victor Francen, makes a diverting tour amongst the ladies of France.

Never have I seen a more comical face upon the screen than that drawn by the superlative comedian Raimu when he finds that the King has done him the honour of conferring upon him the order of *Le Cocu Magnifique*. His expressive horror at his discovery is a triumph of the comic art.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

La Tendre Ennemie

La Tendre Ennemie

(Max Ophüls—French)

Simone Berriau, George Vitray, Marc Valbel.

This is a mordant little satire about three ghosts who attend a betrothal party to save a young girl from contracting an unhappy marriage. There is something of *Topper* about it, but with more nostalgia for life, a less robust enjoyment of the antic for the antic's sake. The ghosts still cling to the shreds of their earthly superstitions. They will not light three cigarettes from one match. They shudder at talk of their own death. They are not joyous comrades by any means, but they have wit and gallantry of a sort, and sometimes a rather wistful pathos.

La Tendre Ennemie is not one of France's greater pictures, but it is neat and individual, contriving a good deal of polite pleasure for one ingenious hour.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Nina Petrovna

(V. Tourjansky—French)

Isa Miranda, Fernand Gravet, Aimé Clariond.

Nina Petrovna is a mourning card for a great city. It is a tale of that old Vienna for which many a Viennese must be sighing now.

It concerns gay young officers and waltzing maidens, duels and dawn and masquerades at midnight, and it is played against a background of gilded salons and garden cafés with tables under the trees. The characters are people whom we have met many times before. We find their acquaintance well worth renewing when their story is told as charmingly as it is here. The film gives us our first glimpse of Isa Miranda, whom we shall shortly be seeing in pictures from Hollywood. She is beautiful, acts with an easy grace, and reminded me of Marlene Dietrich and Lili Damita.

There is a lovely faded glamour about this picture. It is like a tinkling tune played on an old music-box, and its notes seem even sadder when one comes out of the theatre and looks at the posters in the hands of the newspaper boys.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

Generals Without Buttons

(Jacques Daroy—French)

Jean Murat, Claude May, Saturnin Fabre.

They do these things well, the French, and *Generals Without Buttons* has all the virtues of simplicity, genial humour and a refreshing quietude. It is none of your frothy Gallic pieces, nor is it—except by psychoanalytic standards—the penetrating satire on war that the advance press-agentry might have had you believe. It is altogether too gentle for that, too close to the heart and mind of children to be bitter in its consideration of anything. War is a game and love is a game and losing one's trouser buttons to the enemy is a tragedy. *Generals Without Buttons* is as naïve as all that and a delight to a light-minded theatregoer.

The saga of the buttons, of the Longverne Mayor and the Velrans schoolmarm, of the famous peace conference in the village square has been charmingly, cleverly, deftly told. The youngsters have played it with the complete naturalness of children engrossed in a game of make-believe and the grown-ups, like Jean Murat, Claude May and Saturnin Fabre, with just sufficient exaggeration to lend a touch of adult humour. Jacques Daroy has directed it sensitively, with shrewd respect for the iron-clad, adult-posted world children live in, and with a camera-wise relish of the pastoral. War is not supposed to be idyllic and generals should not be quaint, but *Generals Without Buttons* is both.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

COCKA

Written by

Off-White and the Seven Dwarfs

The First Full-Strength Fairy Story Ever Told.

Once upon a time there was a Wicked Queen, called Queen Produsa, who lived in a big old Studio, with a moat and a whole lot of relations running round it.

Now this Wicked Queen had a beautiful step-daughter called Off-White, so named because she had become colourless through being kept locked up in the big gloomy studio with nothing to do.

Among the many trick effects to be found in the Wicked Queen's boudoir was a Magic Mirror. And to this Magic Mirror, she would say:—

"*Magic mirror on the wall,*
Hear my plea and do not stall.
I beg of you, financial geni,
Another loan, don't be a meanie."

To which the Magic Mirror would reply:—

"*Our answer is quite frankly 'Nurts,'*
We've lent you dough until it hurts.
With foreign stars you mess about
While pretty Off-White's doing nowt."

When the Wicked Queen heard this she went into one of her tempers and was in bed for some time with blood-pressure. She realised, however, that there was something in what the Magic Mirror had said.

So she called one of her Publicity Men and said to him: "Take Off-White into the West End and get her some publicity. Plenty of leg pictures, you know." And the Publicity Man hurried away to do her bidding.

So the Publicity Man took Off-White into the heart of the West End to publicise her, but when he gazed upon her, his heart was touched.

"No, no," he said. "I cannot do this foul deed to one so fair."

"Hell," said Off-White, "have I gone blonde for nothing?"

Without answering, the Publicity Man fled into the forest and all the animals ran away from him like mad except the skunks who recognised a friend.

For some time, Off-White wandered aimlessly through the forest until she happened upon the home of The Seven Dwarfs.

They introduced themselves as Greasy, Soapy, Oily, Lousy, Lazy, Spotty and Frankly Indecent. They were, they told Off-White sheepishly, theatrical producers.

Well, Off-White was quite happy with the Seven Dwarfs. She appeared in several of their productions with some success and generally put their house in order.

Now when the Wicked Queen heard of this, through a very suggestive picture on page 4 of her Magic Mirror, she was consumed with jealousy. So she went down to an underground dungeon known as the Contracts Department, and concocted one of her favourite contracts—The Seven Year Contract, or Sleeping Death, from which the victim can only be saved by an earthquake or a blessed event.

It was the work of a minute for the Queen to make herself hideous; then, with the Seven Year Contract, or Sleeping Death, tucked in her pants pocket, she took a taxi up West to the Home of the Seven Dwarfs.

As it happened, the Dwarfs were out playing a mixed eightsome with a friend of theirs called Joe, so the Wicked Queen found Off-White alone.

"Good-morning, my dear," she croaked, "I am an old witch."

"You're telling me," replied Off-White.

The Queen smiled under her false moustache.

"How would you like this lovely rosy contract?" she wheedled. "I've got a million of them."

"Oh goody, goody," said Off-White and she quickly seized the contract and signed it. The next moment she had fallen into the Sleeping Death.

For seven long years Off-White remained inert and motionless in the Sleeping Death, while the Seven Dwarfs and the shy, soft-footed animals we call audiences mourned for her in vain. Then, one day, a handsome talent-scout chanced to pass by and saw Off-White, still beautiful in spite of her outer covering of cobwebs. He leapt out of his roadster and stooping over the still form of Off-White, he rattled a few American dollars in her ear.

Off-White came back to life and left for Hollywood immediately. Her last letter says that she's doing very nicely and hopes to be teamed with Leopold Stokowski in a new musical called "Oh, Mr. Conductor!"

To this day the Wicked Queen may be seen hobbling around her tumbledown castle, gibbering crazily to herself and to the newspapers about a new programme of pictures soon to be started upon.

The Seven Dwarfs now run a hotel at Brighton and get in the way rather.

Pretty Grimm, eh?

(*Note: all the characters in this story are purely fictional and wholly repulsive.*)

PASS GRANNY THE HOT TRUMPET PLEASE

An 18 piece swing band composed of grandmothers between the ages of 45 and 78 will head the list of attractions on Gabriel Heatter's "We, the People" Program . . . over the WABC—Columbia network.

The grandmothers' swing band was organised about a year ago in the Bronx, under the auspices of the WPA Federal Music Project . . . it is composed of women who never before had an opportunity for recreational hobbies. . . . They are practising every night until midnight.

—From a Columbia Broadcasting System publicity sheet

Cue for Song: "Granny's Got Swing":—

Verse.

Little old cottage
With a little old harmonium,
And a little old lady so old and frail,
But there's brand new music
On the little old harmonium
When that little old lady starts raggin' the scale.

Refrain.

Granny's started swinging on her old harmonium
Granny's got rhythm and Granny's got zing.
Hear her do St. Louis Blues it's pandemonium—
Swing's got Granny
And Granny's got swing!
Granny's had a visit from that Old Swing Debbil,
The Rhythm Bug has got her with its well-known sting,
Murder on the bass notes and trouble in the treble—
Swing's got Granny
And Granny's got Swing!
There's lavender and lace
All over the place,
And her back hair's coming down.
When Mother Machree
Drops in for tea
Those little old ladies go to town!
Granny's latest rocking-chair is made of chromium,
Hear her girlish laughter make the rafters ring,
Granny's started swinging on her old harmonium—
Swing's got Granny,
It's quite uncanny,
Swing's got Granny
And Granny's got Swing!
Yowzir!

LORUM

odney Hobson

Dinner at Hate

An "anti-divorce" diet, designed to prevent quarrels between husbands and wives, is being tried by Hollywood film stars.

The principle is simple. It is for both husband and wife to avoid the foods that make them irritable.

—News item

(Scene: the Byzantine dining-hall of a Spanish villa in Beverly Hills. Dinner is served.)

"Say, sweetheart, what's this little culinary catastrophe you've rustled up for a hungry husband?"

"Why, sugar, it's our new anti-divorce diet. If we can only eat the things that don't irritate us, there's no reason why we shouldn't stay happily married for at least a couple of years."

"But, listen, toots, if that's your idea of a non-irritant, I'll take vanilla."

"Now, honey, that's not like you. Here am I working my fingers to the bone for you, and all I get is a lot of dirty cracks."

"And what do I get? Ptomaine, more than likely."

"Wise guy, eh? You'll eat it and like it."

"That's what you think. What is it—some sort of ham?"

"That's right, sweetheart. I was thinking of your acting when I ordered it."

"Smart, eh? Say, listen, if I were a producer I'd cast you for the title role in *Dead End.* That's what I'd do. Anyway, I ain't hungry."

"Maybe you swallowed your pride. That'd give you that feeling of fulness."

"Aw, go jump in the lake—I'm having the water changed to-morrow anyhow."

"All right, Typhoid, if that's the way you feel about it." (She beckons to the butler.)

"Hey, Al, you was in Mack Sennett comedies once, wasn't you?"

"Dat's right, leddy."

"You've slung a custard-pie in your time, eh?"

"Have I slung a pie? Listen, beautiful, I could hit a running cop in the kisser at fifty yards."

"Swell. Howdya like to grab a hold on this omelette and plaster it evenly over old sourpuss there?"

"De boss, baby?"

"How quaintly you phrase things! I mean my husband. Swing it, brother."

Wham!

"Nice shooting, kid. Now pass me the phone, will you. I've some reservations to make in Reno . . ."

(*At that moment she is drenched by a fire-hose. For this is Hollywood and it is Spring.*)

LAMENT FOR A LANKY LOVELY

A 6-ft. blonde beauty of Broadway can't get escorts. She is popular on the stage, but when men see her seventy-two inches of loveliness bearing down on them they quit.

"American men are such total 'sillies'," she says. "If they can't tower over a girl and impress her with a feeling of guardianship they decline to be her companion."

—News Item

The average Yankee
Doesn't like his ladies to be lanky.
He cannot feel that he's a guardian
When the girl-friend has to fold up like an accordion.
In order to hear
What he's trying to whisper in her ear.
Yes, American men are such total "sillies"
That it gives them the willies
To have to stand on a chair
In order to share
What they hope is going to be a witticism,
Only to hear a pretty sharp criticism
Of the stature
Allotted them by Nature.
Life in America is full of sport
For the girl who's short,
But for the long and the lissom,
It obviously issom.

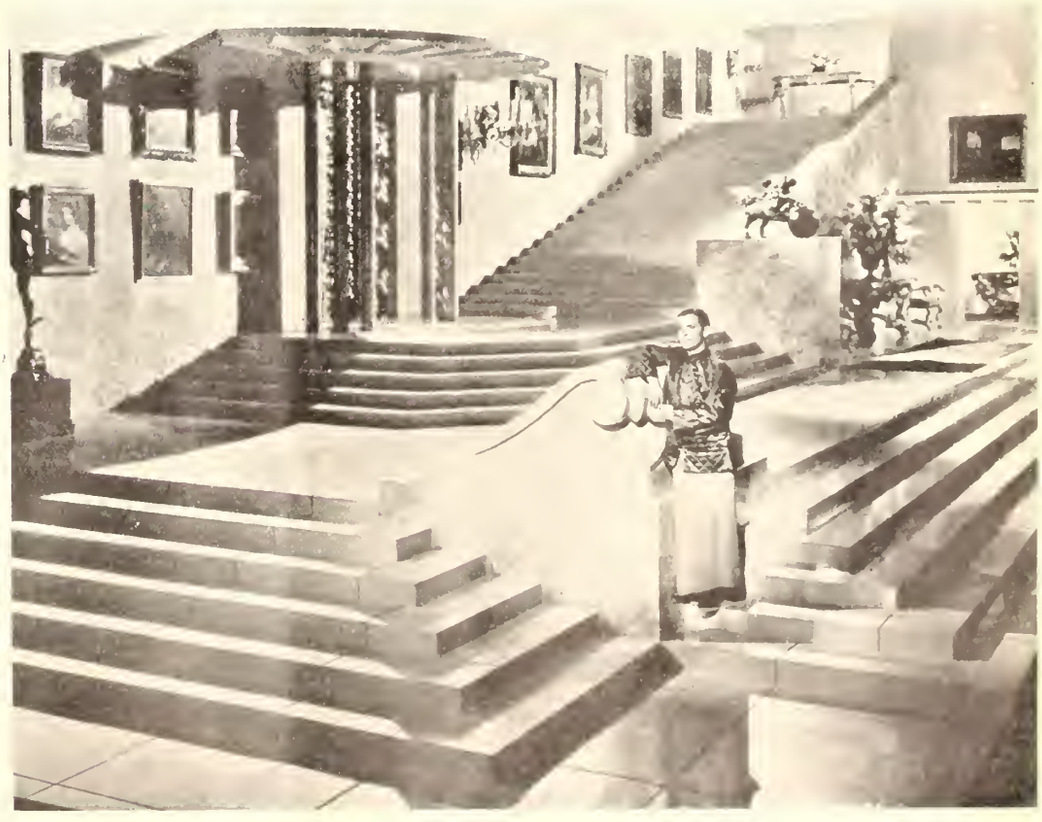
Hurt Felines Department

It was alleged in an article in *The Animals' Friend* that cruel methods were used to keep 200 cats on the set for a scene in *The Goldwyn Follies.* They were supposed to have been blown on with air-hoses.

This allegation was vigorously denied by Mr. Goldwyn, but it has provided this department with an idea. Why not supply all studios with air-hoses to blow certain highly-paid cats *off* the set. That Miss X, for instance; and that handsome Mr. A—a well-directed air-hose would do him all the good in the world, even if it only blew his toupee over his eyes.

And there are one or two of the little Wardour Street alley-cats we might hose off the set, eh, Mrs. Rackstraw? You know as well as I do who I mean, you big tease, so don't pretend you don't.

Always in the forefront of progress and well to the back at trade shows, *World Film News* have now endowed a mobile air-hose unit for the use of British Studios. This can be put to many uses such as turning over the pages of sticky scripts; as a means of artificial respiration for semi-conscious leading ladies; or it can be pressed into service to represent the passionate breathing of juvenile leads who have never been seen to breathe at all.



"Can't keep open with only three in the one and sixpennies."

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BY ROBERT HUMFREY

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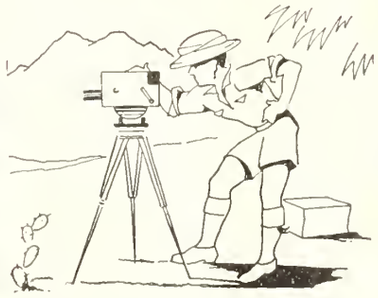

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GROWN-UPS often PREFER the CHILDREN'S HOUR

Some listeners' opinions discussed by GEORGE AUDIT

If Sir Stephen Tallents cannot send more producers outside the B.B.C., he can at least bring the opinions of ordinary people back to the B.B.C. This he is trying to do consistently and methodically through the Listener Research Department.

It is only about a year since the B.B.C. came to the belated but sensible conclusion that they must find some reliable substitute for the box-office verdict on the popularity of any particular item. Until then they had worked partly by group guesswork, the group being the dozen or so people who are in charge of programme planning at Broadcasting House, and partly in line with the suggestions and criticisms seeping through from their Correspondence Department. But this method had certain blind spots. For it was assumed that programmes were popular so long as no excessive complaints rolled in. But it did not occur to them that a man will only complain when he is dissatisfied, *and has no alternative course.*

It is simple enough when considered in practice. The religious and subdued tone of Sunday programmes were and are distasteful to millions. But instead of writing shoals of letters, listeners, as subsequent research has shown, simply switched over to Radio Normandy or Luxembourg. To take another example, unnecessary time and money were lavished on productions after ten o'clock on weekday evenings and no great volume of written complaints arrived to indicate dissatisfaction. A false assumption was made that such items were generally well received. Actually they were not being received at all as a recent questionnaire has shown that "a mass switching-off of radio sets takes place between 10.0 and 10.30 p.m. on weekdays."

So Listener Research began to distribute questionnaires, set up critical listening panels, and collect information.

When criticisms of radio plays and features were collected it was found that many broadcasts are difficult to follow. It is often hard to distinguish between one character and another and a large cast causes confusion. Listeners want more comedy and are pleased with Classical plays and Victorian melodrama. There was an outcry against background music in plays and features.

This complaint against incidental music still mystifies many producers. But it has been so insistent that one must accept it as a fact and try to find some explanation. In a stage performance the attention is held by the appearance and movement of the characters and if your neighbour asks you for a match, which causes you to miss some of the words, you are not cut off from the performance. In a radio performance you not only lose the appearance, but your distractions are multiplied a thousandfold. While you are listening to a play you may be munching your supper or the baby may start crying. Unless the words are simple and very clear you can easily lose the thread of the story. And then background music only gets in the way.

The Listener Research idea has spread to publications and the *Radio Times* has just called in 8,182 letters of criticism. Many of them show uncommon sense especially when dealing with the manner of radio productions. Witness:—

1ST LISTENER. Mr. Middleton talks, and the others read—and usually read very badly. There is no point in bringing a famous man to the microphone to read his paper. It would be better to give the job to an announcer.

B.B.C. But where can you find speakers like Mr. Middleton? And working people are no better than the famous, witness *In Town To-night.*

2ND LISTENER. The dullness of In Town To-night could be avoided by choosing people who do or have done things that are by nature interesting.

3RD LISTENER. One would suppose (from the caricatures you put over on the air) that the working class Londoner is an utter nitwit, unable to appreciate anything but beer and tobacco and entirely unable to enunciate a single sentence except in an idiotic and degraded tone of voice.

4TH LISTENER. Why must all plays portraying characters of girls in business make them appear so illiterate and ungrammatical—or alternatively so ultra-refeened?

B.B.C. There are other points of view. Such as—

5TH LISTENER. I do not like to hear the too frequent use of the word 'blimey'. I believe it to be a shortening of the low-down vulgarism used by gutter-merchants.

6TH LISTENER. I blame the B.B.C. because they evince a growing pre-occupation with 'the man in the street' whose empty head and expressionless face already loom too large on our horizon.

Now hear what they have to say about microphone technique:—

7TH LISTENER. Those who seem to me best at producing a friendly atmosphere are those who seem to be enjoying themselves, i.e., A. J. Alan telling a story as if he had just dropped in for a smoke and a yarn.

8TH LISTENER. And anything that destroys one's illusion as to the spontaneous performance should be cut out.

AUDIT. They want to hear their own language—

9TH LISTENER. Let there be announcers who will convey in their speech something of the native culture of the Regions.

AUDIT. What they think of jazz—

10TH LISTENER. And as to jazz—it gives the average manual labourer the pip!

AUDIT. A confession!—

11TH LISTENER. I usually go to church but I leave my mind behind me at the fireside.

AUDIT. Another, from a young girl—

12TH LISTENER. Sundays have their trials: clean clothes, religious duties, father's rest, visitors and best manners, but all would be forgotten if we could have a Children's Hour on Sunday.

AUDIT. Grown-ups often prefer the Children's Hour—

13TH LISTENER. The Children's Hour plays are good, and it would be very nice to hear some of them later in the evenings.

AUDIT. And they don't like crooners—

14TH LISTENER. Here is a verse, taken fresh from the mouth of a crooner:

Lick a cow aline a let
OOO ten how a Rine a low.
Say high cow adown a let
Ah! How a cow has so.

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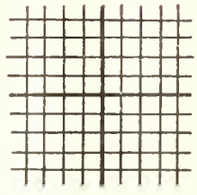

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MOVIES IN MUSWELL HILL

"Muswell Hill," said one cinema manager, "divides its leisure between the Church, the Cinema and the Green Man." Overlooking the great expanse of North London, elevated physically by its position, culturally by its snobbery, Muswell Hill was once a stronghold of middle-class respectability. Lately it has lost much of its exclusiveness. Flats have increased the population at the expense of the exclusiveness. It is still predominantly "better middle-class," and nowhere is this more reflected than in its cinemas.

Until three years ago Muswell Hill was poorly equipped. Two new supers put an end to the mediocre entertainment of their old-fashioned predecessors, and made the cinema much more a part of the life of every day. Each of the two large houses attracts a slightly different type of patron; there are few regulars in either case and all show considerable care in their choice of film. A picture which does not gain the approval of Monday night's audience might as well be written up as a failure right away.

At the cheaper cinema the greatest attractions are spectacle and action, rather than atmosphere and sentiment. The pace must be fairly fast, either swift and dramatic, or slick and funny—something refreshing after the humdrum of suburban life. *Educated Evans* was a great success here. Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire were popular for a time, but enthusiasm waned as the novelty wore off. Perhaps their films were not "meaty" enough for these filmgoers—they certainly like something to exercise their mental molars on. Newsreels, in moderation, get by with credit, and the *March of Time* is considered by the manager to have a definite box-office value, though he says that to show more than one 20 minutes' documentary in a programme would be bad policy. Similarly any form of moralising meets with a chilly reception.

At the dearer house, tastes are a little different. Here we have the Mecca of the aged, who form a fair proportion of the inhabitants of Muswell Hill. A telling commentary on the nature of the audience is the enormous demand for the deaf-aids which are installed. It has even been known for an old lady to request a cushion for her sciatica and accommodation for her pekingese! Retired gentlefolk, a considerable element in the neighbourhood, make the cinema a genteel form of recreation, and choose their films with care, boycotting anything with a doubtful title. They have no use for anything far-fetched or exotic. They like a good, sensible plot of medium pace. They like films about ordinary people like themselves, or historically familiar characters—Britishers like Clive and Rhodes, whose motives they can understand and admire. A tale with a true British flavour, though not necessarily of British production, goes down as well as anything.

(*Continued at foot of next column*)

The most astonishing success was *Victoria the Great*. It attracted not only keen filmgoers, but many for whom its appeal was a personal or patriotic one. And a vast number had never, judging by their disconcerted manner, been inside a cinema before; but they remembered Victoria, and overcame their prejudices against "new-fangled amusements" in order to revive memories of times which had been their own. They hobbled forth, pushing each other in bathchairs, of which a considerable number were in evidence, and turning aside from the very brink of the grave to take a last look at the Grand Old Lady. Never had the cinema seen so large an audience, and certainly never had so great a proportion been over eighty years of age.

Daphne Hudson

BOOK REVIEWS

D'Annunzio

By Tom D'Antongini (Heinemann, 15*s.*)

"I WAS at that time", writes Antongini in the course of a chapter on *D'Annunzio and the Cinema*, "the Editor of a fashion paper which had brought me a little money, and a good deal of trouble, and, as a compensation which I considered by no means despicable, the acquaintance of numerous 'mannequins' whom D'Annunzio, for once (a rare case in the course of our friendship) was forced to sample at second-hand". It will not only be readers of "Cockalorum" who will recognise this as a suitable prelude to a deal in film-making; nor will it be much of a surprise to learn that the famous D'Annunzio film *Cabiria* was shot before he had anything to do with it, and that his part in the cause was the supplying of sub-titles, the main title, and such modifications to the story which could be managed with the rushes already in existence. For this he was paid 50,000 lire (pre-war). He never saw the film. There is little more to be recorded of his relations with the film world, save that late in his life he saw a large number of films in private shows at his home, and thereafter delivered himself of the following remark—"I have been unable to take stock of the limits which this art of velocity has reached, but I know that it is only at the beginning of its career."

However, the chapter on cinema is only a small part of this hefty volume, in which Antongini, who knew D'Annunzio as intimately as any male could know him, and over a very long period of years (having been both his private secretary and his publisher), details, with a frankness only justified by his unshakable hero-worship, the behaviour and methods of life adopted by the poet.

Inevitably, much of the book is devoted to a study of fornication, which, apart from the writing of a not inconsiderable number of books, seems to have been the *chef d'œuvre* of this extraordinary man. I, for one, cannot find any more interest in the beast with two backs because it is domiciled among 500 damask cushions, erotic scents, and rose petals in a dwelling place tastelessly crammed with fin-de-siècle bijouterie. Sometimes it was Eleanora Duse, sometimes just a "stray cat" (charming description). By multiplication of examples there lies no great value; and perhaps Antongini would have done both his readers and the poet a service had he realised this. What was D'Annunzio anyway? He wrote some good novels, some good poetry, and was, in his early days at any rate, a really superb journalist. An individualist almost to a pathological degree, he lived a "naughty nineties" type of existence mingled with the now out-of-date extravagance of a Medici. He could fire people's enthusiasm, and he enjoyed the sport of war with an enthusiasm worthy of Mussolini Junior, that intrepid bomber of defenceless Abyssinians. And he bugled, in the Fiume episode, a fantastic and not ignoble gesture of patriotism. Had he been a man of administration and strategic ability (which the fizzle out at Fiume shows he was not) he might well have occupied the seat which is now Mussolini's, and he can certainly be said to have been one of the prime founders of Fascism.

All this Antongini's book emphasises with surprising fervour; for those who do not find D'Annunzio, for all his sensationalism, a "personnage peu interessant" it will make admirable reading. For others, it will at least raise the old, old argument—was this man worth his poetry—in the most acute and vicious form. Myself, I think he lived at least 300 years too late. Have we any use nowadays for someone whose favourite motto is "Me ne frego"—"I don't care."

B. W.

A Bibliography on the Cinema

Issued by Bristol Public Libraries

WE who review books periodically in these columns ought perhaps to have realised the amazingly large number of books on the cinema which have been published. We should probably have agreed that there are about 50 books on films, but the Bristol public libraries have just issued a bibliography on the cinema which has over 200 entries. It is a very thorough job of work including sections on Law, Censorship, Theatre Design, Writing for the Films, Photography, Projection, Sound, Colour and Documentary. Sections on the Cinema in Education, and Children and the Films should be particularly valuable to teachers, and the List of Periodicals should be in the hands of all Film Society secretaries. The booklet is available from James Ross, F.L.A., F.R.S.L., The City Librarian, Bristol.

Primarily it is designed with special reference to the availability of the books through the Bristol Libraries, but it stands as a remarkably complete bibliography on the cinema, and as such will be welcomed in a wider field. **T. B.**

BOOK REVIEWS

We Make the Movies

Edited by Nancy Naumburg (Faber & Faber. 10*s.* 6*d.*).

FAST on the heels of *Behind the Screen* comes the more solid performance of *We Make the Movies*. The idea is the same. Sixteen experts on film production analyse their respective jobs, and the whole process from script to screen is teased out bit by bit. The quality of this particular symposium may be judged by the names of the writers. It is an imposing list, containing names like Muni, Bette Davis, Walt Disney, Jesse Lasky and Sidney Howard, the writer. Judged strictly as an account of production processes, and as a compendium of information, no book could be better. All are first-rate workmen, and reflect their quality, and no one more than Robert E. Lee, who writes on the work of an Assistant Director. Few, perhaps, will want to know what an Assistant Director does in the world, but I get the impression that when all the shouting of producer, director, star, and "director of photography" is over, Robert E. Lee and his like do most of the work.

There is the nice earnestness about Paul Muni's contribution which one would expect of him. "Pictures must devote themselves to more than story or personality. They must present themes which will reach the audience. By recreating the lives and characters which have been potent social forces in their own time, perhaps the actor can reach people and influence them so that they will go forth with a new strength and a new vision for combating the evils of our own society."

Bette Davis has a shorter, but less articulated receipt for the role of the actress. "Hard work does it, health, and the determination to let nothing stop you."

By far the best essay in the book, however, is Sidney Howard's account of "How the story gets a treatment". If the book is, on the whole, a trifle too earnest and too informative, Mr. Howard blows the nonsense out of it with his first sentence. "The process by which the screen adaptor goes to work is, in itself, designed to cancel out inspiration." The rest is what one might expect from the fine dramatist who wrote "They Knew What They Wanted". Whatever Hollywood may do to its writers, it matures their humour.

Visualising Curriculum

By Charles F. Hoban, Snr. and Jnr. (The Garden Publishing Co. U.S.A.).

OTHER visual aids to learning are apt to be forgotten by those who preoccupy themselves with films.

The film might be a very superior instrument of observation but there are other school implements of great value. The novelty of the film tends to eclipse the value of other techniques. We are very grateful to the Hobans for putting the whole business in perspective.

Visualising Curriculum discusses the school journey, the museum visit, the use of lantern slides, film strips, maps and illustrated books. The others find film the instrument *par excellence* for organised observation of the real world. Visits and journeys can develop techniques of observation and the newspaper can be a filter to organise experience. The school visit suffers because the real experience tends to be fortuitous, it is an unorganised experience. The newspaper technique suffers because the process of editing and selecting which prepares the world for our inspection, may not give just the residue which the teacher needs. Documentary film, the authors find, gives a more balanced observation and dramatises the process which may remain dull and too particularised on a school visit. Film can show background and perspective to a process. It can gather examples scattered in space and time, and present them in a unity. *Visualising Curriculum* is itself an excellent example of an illustrated text-book. An imaginative make-up and profuse use of illustrated matter makes, what otherwise might have been just another text book, a readable and attractive example of modern school literature.

T.B.

Bombay Riots

By C. Denis Pegge (Honeyhill Press. 5*s.*).

THIS book is written in the form of a shooting script, but it does not claim to be the mere skeleton which the cameraman and cutter will later cover. It is, in itself, complete and satisfying. The author, seeking to convey the kaleidoscopic implications behind such an incident as the Ghandi riots in Bombay, the attitudes and problems of all sections of the community, the traditions and background of white men and Indians, has had forced on him this ingenious technique.

The "shots" are not merely indicated; their content and atmosphere is described with something of poetry. Once the tension, the suspense before a coming clash, has been established, the story moves on—shot by shot, exceedingly visual and never obtrusively literary—in such a manner that it is difficult to put it down before the end is reached. Film people will find it of technical interest. Others, less befogged with technicalities, will enjoy it for its qualities of sympathy and excitement, and for the very real picture of India and its problems which it so vividly paints.

My Wife's The Least of It

By William Gerhardi (Faber & Faber. 10*s.* 6*d.*).

MR. WILLIAM GERHARDI hits out at the Film Industry. His writing is unconventional and amusing. The film world gives him adequate scope and resources in a setting where the author's satirical humour can be seen at its best. The theme is a study of eccentricity and insanity (very much preferable to mediocrity) and this does much to make his characters seem even more human and alive than they might otherwise have been—for the novel is long and at times thin.

Mr. Baldridge, an author, past the prime of life, is still reaping a meagre existence from his one and only success "Dixie". Life, however, is flat and the future uncertain. At last, at the end of his tether, he is persuaded to turn "Dixie" into a scenario and sell to a film company. He spares no efforts to convince the "big men" that "Dixie" is on the right track. Life becomes hectic and complicated. "Dixie" is not sold and our hero's exuberant optimism is taken from his eyes. Next he pops down another hole of escapism in his marriage to an insane millionairess, and becomes a whole-hearted supporter of the Charity Racket, in which the author's ironical humour finds abundant targets.

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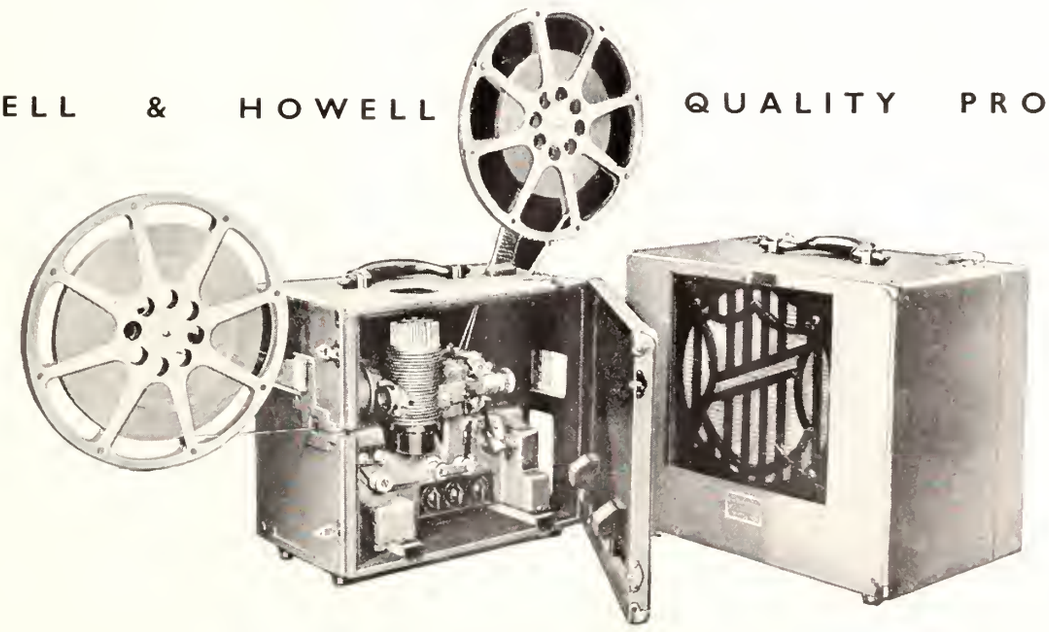

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WORLD FILM NEWS

JULY 1938

Vol. 3 No. 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Still: *A Slight Case of Murder*

"Who's Got Fundamentals Any More?" Interview with Edgar Kennedy: by *Russell Ferguson* 100, 101, 102

Anything But Love, Baby: by *Ezra Goodman* 103

A Couple of Pages of Dialogue: by *Louis Paul* 104, 105

Boy Meets Girl: from the script by *Bella* and *Samuel Spewack* 106, 107, 109

Small Town Man. A Life of Walt Disney: by *H. E. Blyth* 110, 111, 112, 113, 115

The Maginot Line: A Columbia Broadcast 116, 117

Old Man River: by *David Thompson* 118, 119

'The River' Damned: by *Muriel Rukeyser* 121

You Can't Take It With You: by *Alistair Cooke* 122, 123

Camera on Nature 124, 125

Films Reviewed: by *Basil Wright* and *Marion Fraser* . . . 126, 127

Review of Reviews 128, 129, 130, 131

The Month's Releases 133

Cockalorum 134, 135

Book Reviews 136

Crime at the Box-Office: by *Richard Carr* 137

Film Guide 138

'The Challenge': by *Elizabeth Coxhead* 139

Late News Summary: by *George Audit* 140

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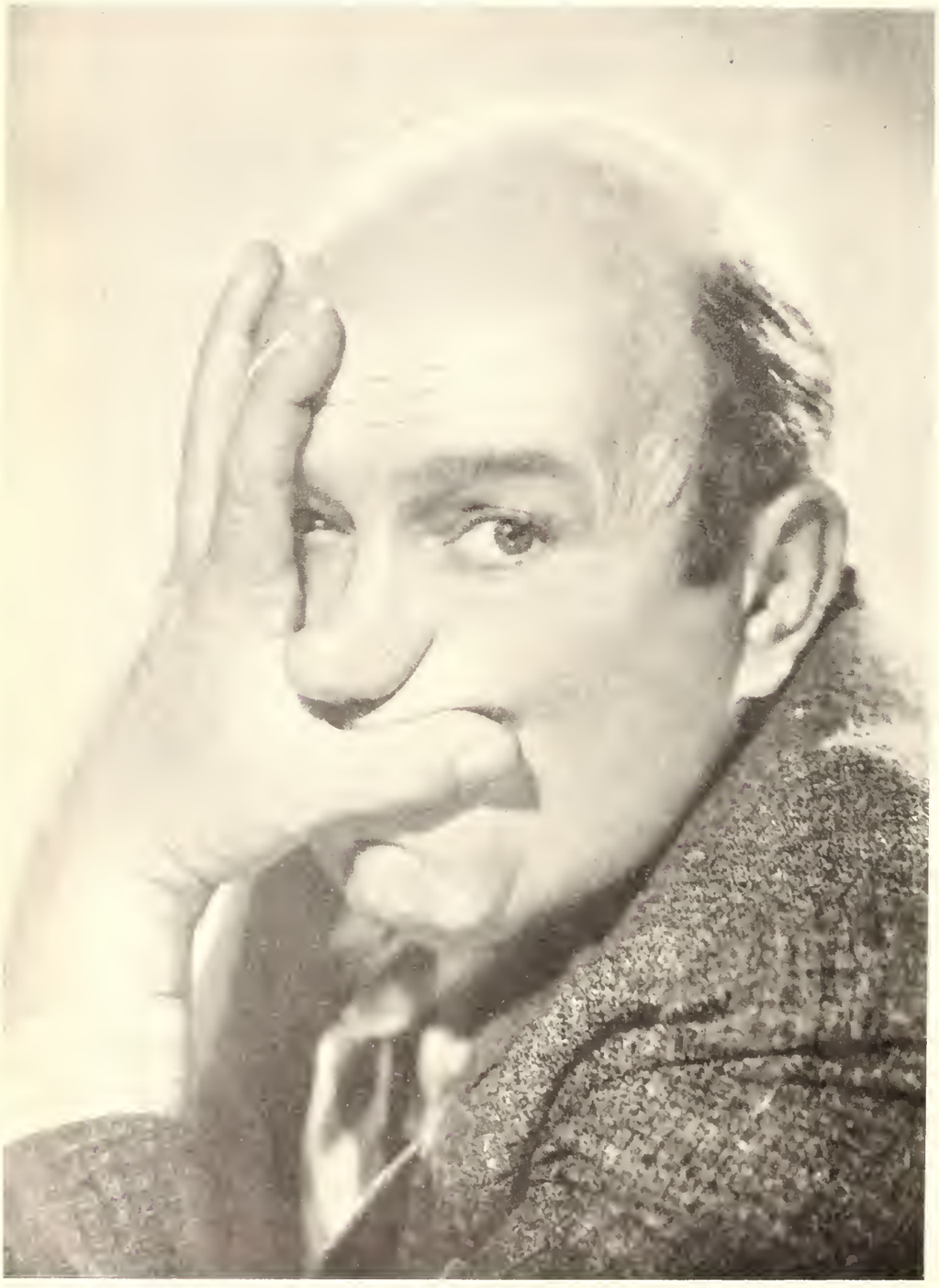
"WHO'S GOT FUNDAMENTALS ANY MORE?"

asks 'Slow-burn' Edgar Kennedy in an interview

with RUSSELL FERGUSON



I've had twenty-six years of it now. I was a prize-fighter for a bit before that, but I reckoned if I had brains enough for a boxer I had brains enough for an actor. I was one of the Keystone cops, with Mack Swain, Chester Conklin, Roscoe Arbuckle, and all those boys. Mack Swain, he died last year, Chester Conklin's pretty well off by now, doesn't act much.

Not that I've done so bad myself. I can't stay in features all the time—every two or three years I take a turn at directing. I'm a comedy director, I've directed Laurel and Hardy and Charley Chase and things for Hal Roach. It gives me a change and keeps me off the screen for a bit. I do six shorts a year for R.K.O., too. I have to start right in when I get back this summer.

I guess I'm one of the guys that never let himself get too big—like Jean Hersholt for instance, just moving along and doing his work without wanting to be a star. Stars get too much money, and they get into bad pictures, and that's one of the ways they go out. You see, when a star gets popular the company gets to rely on him to sell pictures whether they're good or bad, and anyway, if the star is real big they can't afford to pay for good support.

If you're a good featured player, now, it pays you in a lot of ways. You get good money, and you get into good pictures, because if the company has to pay a good figure for you, they want to put you in something worth while so as to get their money's worth out of you. When a featured player gets well known, he gets into better and better pictures; when a star gets well known, there's the danger he gets into worse and worse pictures, for the reason I've said. I don't know if I've made it clear for you, but that's how I figure it out.

Now, there's Adolphe Menjou—there's a guy I've never seen in a bad film. Do you ever think what a background a man like that has got? What experience? He's always working too, because he's a damned fine actor. He gives his experience to the whole bunch, he wouldn't *let* a picture get bad, even if it was shaping that way, he'd throw his weight into it and pull it round. A man like Menjou is worth all the money he gets, because he knows his job from the bottom up.

You know, I think the men who were in the silent films have it over the newcomers who belong to the talkie time. Do you remember the old silent days? We had to act everything, and make the right faces and stand the right way and dope out actions and gestures for everything. That experience stays with you—many a time I forget my lines because I'm working inside on the business that goes with them, may be wrestling with a door-handle or having a stand-up argument with a wardrobe door, and if it doesn't work out, I forget my lines because I haven't got the whole thing going smooth, from inside, while some guy standing by like a poker thinking of nothing but his lines comes out with them as smooth as silk and thinks he's an actor.

That's what the talkies have done to the movies. In the old days, if you didn't act it, nobody knew what it was supposed to be. Nowadays, talk, talk, talk, it's all on the sound track, and you can get by without acting at all. Did you know that there's a new school of acting taking place just now? They don't act.

I'll tell you a funny thing to show you what I mean. It was—well, he's a good guy, so I won't tell you his name. He was to get shot through the shoulder in a fight, and step forward when he heard "Anybody hurt?" and say "I'm shot through the shoulder". Well, we play it, and he steps forward and says "I'm shot through the shoulder", like saying "I'm all out of cigarettes" or something. The scene has to be taken again for some reason, right at the end of our stay on location, when we're all tired and wanting to get home, and I says to him "Only another day now" and he says "What for?" and I says "For your shooting scene".

He says "Hell, that will take less than half an hour". I says "Yes, the way you did it. Have you ever been shot through the shoulder? It hurts like hell, and that bullet was supposed to go clean through you from the back, or else it was a pretty bum bullet. Look, *hit me* in the shoulder, never mind shooting me, and I'll let you know I've been hit, and I was a prize-fighter". "Ah", he says, "you're out-of-date. We don't act nowadays". I couldn't resist it. I says, "Damn right. You don't act, but you call yourself an actor".

There's more to it, too. With all this talk, there's something has gone out of the movies, nearly. I don't know if you remember, but in the old silent days you and I and my wife could go to a movie, and come out with three different ideas of it, because we were three different people.

Edgar Kennedy, Frank McHugh and Joan Blondell in the Warner Bros. hit "Three Men on a Horse"

Look, what I think is, people are interested in what a guy is thinking, not what he's saying, at least, they may be interested in what he's saying, but what they like best is to figure out for themselves what he's thinking, without being told. That's where they get the real joy, in seeing for themselves what's not too obvious. This is hard to explain, I guess, but I'll prove it to you.

Have you seen Will Hay's act at the Palladium, his school act? Well, it's a swell act all right. Remember the bit where he has that gag "Moses was the daughter of Pharaoh's son", and one of the kids asks him to write it on the board, and he writes "Moses was the daughter of" and then stops there with his back to the audience and his arm in the air ready to write and does nothing. It gets the biggest laugh in the whole act. Now, I ask you, why? Would it be funny if he said "I can't spell Pharaoh"? Would it? It would mean exactly the same as stopping there. But the way Will does it, the audience gets its chance to use its own judgment, and that's why they think it's so good. I guess the audience contributes. That's a fundamental part of the whole game.

But who's got fundamentals, any more? I guess the most of the movies start way up top, with no fundamentals, they don't get down to the things that get the belly-laughs, or really do something to you.

Just to show you what some guys know about acting, I'll tell you about the first musical I ever played in. The director has an idea and calls me into one scene, and says "Ed, I want you in here, and I want a slow-burn, and I want it in four beats of the music".

Well, I ask you. Can you imagine what it feels like to be asked to do a quick slow-burn? I'm a reasonable guy, so I practised a minute or two, and then told him it was no use. He goes to the music director, and comes back with the great news that I can get six beats. This was just about as bad. Finally, I got eight beats from him and made it. But hell! What an idea! Slow-burning to a metronome. Timing isn't done with a clock. Timing is just thinking. I said that to you away back, when I told you about forgetting lines, through having my head full of timing.

HULLO, Will. Come right in, Will. Well, well, so you're sliding out before they see you go. I don't blame you, Will. When are you getting a rest? At the week-end? Well, you deserve it. So long, Will.

There's a man that's doing a picture and a week at the Palladium at the same time. That's what I call working. He's a great guy, a real fifty-fifty guy. He makes a team. I never worked with a guy I liked working with better. He was a bit shy with me at first.

His hobby is astronomy, he has quite a place, quite an observatory or whatever it is you call it, at his private house at Hendon. I guess he loves his hobby as much as his screen acting.

SURE, I like it here at Gainsborough. I like the way Will works, I told you, and I like the way the whole place works. They are treating me as well as ever I have been treated

Top. Edgar Kennedy with Janet Gaynor in "A Star is Born." Above: "Three Men on a Horse."

in my twenty-six years in the movies. Do you know, I get my own way in practically everything? I don't always get what I asked for at first, but what I do get is always what I want, because we just talk things over, and if my way's best, we do it like that, and if their way's best, I see it while we're talking, and we do it like that. Everybody takes part in any discussion, Will, little Tommy Bupp and our Director, Marcel Varnel, and there's no bad manners or quarrels, and nobody gets on his high horse and can't get down, and there's nobody waiting for you in corners saying "That guy's got it in for me, know what he said to so and so?" and there's nobody asking you to take sides.

I like England too. I wish I could have some place in the country and go to it at nights. Hotels are not my kind of life, but I have to stay in a hotel, working till half-past seven with a call next morning at nine. I eat most of my meals in my room because I'm too tired to dress that time of night. Like a working man? Sure, that's what I am, a working man.

But still I've seen a good bit of London already and I took a trip up to Edinburgh last week-end—Princes Street is the loveliest street I've seen—with that castle on the hill and all.

The only thing that amused me about England was seeing people eating with a knife in one hand and a fork in the other. At home we were taught to cut everything first and eat it dainty with a fork, and many a time I've smacked my boy and said "*Would* you put that knife down?" but I guess he's a natural Englishman or something. The English are so good at it too, they use the knife so pretty. I tried it, but hell, I couldn't get anything on the fork. I told my wife about it as soon as I saw it, and she didn't believe it, till one night we were dining out and she exclaims "Ed, Ed, I saw a woman do it. I saw a woman do it." Well I'm getting over it. I guess it must be right enough for here. I expect Queen Elizabeth does it too.

WHAT have you seen recently? Tom Sawyer? Was it good? A swell film? Yeah, I guessed so. All the same, films should be films, not made out of books, at least, not well-known books, because books are alive, and they are quite different for different people. A film of a book is never more than fifty per cent. successful for me, often a good deal less, at least, *as* a film of the book. One book I read when I was a kid—no, I've never read it since, I'm afraid to, I might lose something of it—was "Les Misérables". Every time it's filmed, I go and see it. Every time, I feel, they've missed everything. But every time it's good as a film. Do I say it's a lousy film? No, I have no right to say that, because the man that made it has as much right to his "Les Misérables" as I have to mine, though I may go on thinking I know more about it than he does. Anyway, you should never say a film is lousy. It's not fair. It would be all right to lay into it if the guys weren't trying, but hell! I've never seen a film where the actors aren't trying all they know. Maybe not your way, but if you knew how much sweat goes into it, you would let it go by, even if you didn't like it much. Anyhow, that's my point of view, and I guess I know a little about films.

I'll tell you a good gag to try on some guy when he comes out of a movie with you, saying "God, that stank." It works every time. Start off with "Well, I thought the bit about the shoes was kinda nice." He says "Yes, so it was". Then go on with "And the bit where the girl waved the handkerchief". He says, "Yes, quite nice". Then you say "And the bit where the dog ran out", and he says "Yes, it was quite well done ". Then when you've got him that far you say "Why, you liked the main things in the film, and you have the cheek to say it's lousy. You goddam son of a bitch, what do you expect for a quarter?"

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ANYTHING but LOVE, BABY

Black eyes replace purple passion in present-day movies

LOVE, in the cinema, has taken a new turn. No longer does the tender passion find expression in soulful glances, whispered vows or burning clinches. Instead, the hero and heroine trade volleys of uppercuts as tokens of their mutual affection, mowing each other down with passionate haymakers.

Historians of the cinema proclaim that this battle of the sexes began when James Cagney gallantly dunked Mae Clarke's nose in a grapefruit in *The Public Enemy* of six years ago. Mae's instance was the most spectacular. Many other gangster molls were roughly treated in that extensive series of films extending from *Beast of the City* and *Smart Money* to *Marked Women* and *Kid Galahad.*

The girls in these "unhand me, you brute" films were never actually knocked slap-happy. They were merely handled like a coin being flipped about by a saturnine henchman with the jitters. In short, they were not treated according to the dictates of Emily Post.

To-day, the gangster film, even in its G Man metamorphosis, is largely moribund. It has been succeeded by the sophisticated, slapstick comedy, popularly supposed to have been born (or re-born) with *My Man Godfrey*, the Gregory la Cava production in which Carole Lombard and William Powell executed some inspired horse-play. *My Man Godfrey* is credited with having initiated the current, pixilated cinema trend.

In these films, the heroine, being unconventional, daring, independent, etc., found herself in ticklish situations from which she found it impossible to extricate herself with the usual, catty drawing-room innuendoes. In this cinematic man's world, where no holds are barred, the little ladies were forced to have recourse to their wits and their punches as well.

Outstanding instances of this feminine emancipation were Jean Arthur, Claudette Colbert and Myrna Loy in such items as *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *It Happened One Night* and *The Thin Man.* The girls in these films slept in haystacks, uncovered corpses in their bedroom closets, dashed around the country on buses, and their unprecedented antics ultimately led up to the full-fledged hit-and-run motion pictures.

Examine the evidence. In *True Confession*, the same Miss Lombard who was one of the zanies in *Twentieth Century* and *My Man Godfrey*, was lovingly bounced about by Fred MacMurray, immersed in an Adirondack lake and confronted with the facial apoplectics of John Barrymore. In *Nothing Sacred* she met with further punishment, dishing it out as well. She exchanged uppercuts with Fredric March, jumped in and out of the East River at night and took New York City for a collective ride, suffering all the while from alleged radium poisoning. William (Wild Bill) Wellman, who directed *Nothing Sacred* (and *Public Enemy* also) is noted as one of Hollywood's foremost purveyors of this type of uninhibited business. In fact, Wellman's performance on the motion picture set is described as surpassing that of his stars and equalling that of the supreme master, Ernst Lubitsch.

Thus far, matters were moderately comprehensible. Carole, as a former Sennett bathing beauty, could properly sock and be socked, jump into bodies of water and smear the town a bright red. But further developments in this genre were astounding, to say the least.

Joan Blondell was next to succumb. In both *Back in Circulation* and *There's Always a Woman*, she ripped into and through her roles like the three Ritz Brothers. In the last-named film, Miss Blondell was given a third-degree by a tough police squad throughout the night. The morning found Joan pert and smiling, while the muscle-bound bulldogs of the law were half asleep after their unprecedented exertion.

In *Love, Honor and Behave*, pretty Priscilla Lane squared off in a slugfest with Wayne Morris, who is more than six feet tall. Morris, who proved his pugilistic talents in *Kid Galahad* and *The Kid Comes Back*, almost lost this encounter, but was just saved by the fade-out at the end of the eighth reel.

The staid and stately Irene Dunne, heroine of such tear-jerkers as *Symphony of Six Million* and such quasi-epics as *Cimarron*, went the way of all actresses by becoming brash and pixilated in *The Awful Truth*, one of the better films of last year, directed by the same Leo McCarey who gave us *Make Way for To-morrow.* Miss Dunne, who had passed her preliminary test with *Theodora Goes Wild*, proved here that she could play slapstick with the best of them.

But the great surprise to date came when Katharine Hepburn—The Miss Hepburn—took the plunge in *Bringing Up Baby.* Letting her hair down, Miss Hepburn became involved, consecutively, with such phenomena as psychiatrists, palæontologists, leopards and one of the most lengthy series of slapstick falls since Mabel Normand and Fatty Arbuckle were in their prime. All with remarkable success.

The surrender of Miss Hepburn presages the complete capitulation of the tragediennes of Lower California. The crystal ball of the future reveals visions of Garbo, Dietrich and Temple tangling with impossible people in even more impossible situations, all fomented in the wildest vapourings of desperate scriptwriters, and all dedicated to the belly-laugh. Out of little Keystones does 1938's box-office come.

Ezra Goodman

A Couple of Pages of Dialogue

Like he kept saying, that picture might be a flop at the Box Office, but it was sure to be an artistic success

• by LOUIS PAUL •

THE trouble is this. Once you're pegged at three-fifty a week, try and get a raise. That last musical the seven of us cooked up was a B.O. wow, and yet here I am working my fingers to the bone for peanuts. B.O. can stand for Box Office or Body Odour. Interchangeable synonyms? Can't use it. Even if it weren't too subtle for the horse-opera patrons they'd kill it up in the front office. Maybe I ought to knock out a couple of pages of dialogue this morning. Trouble with that is, if you get anything done in a hurry around here they think it smells. Funny how people figure a script writer is the little pampered darling of fortune. What we go through! Three-fifty a week. It sounds like Death Valley Scotty's gold mine until you deduct agent fees and front—a duplex apartment, ads in the *Hollywood Reporter*, the Troc and Al Levy's, a big dingus every so often for story editors and assorted bums. And that's not counting the income tax and—In fact I'll have to get twenty bucks from Jerry to see me through until Saturday.

This may flop at the box office, but it's certainly going to be an artistic success. All the characters and events depicted herein are entirely fictitious, having been lifted directly from the newspaper headlines. Make a note of a funny story to be worked into next comedy that comes along. Visualise a script writer so dumb that nobody's feelings can possibly be hurt. (Plenty dumb.) He is protesting against the suggestion of plagiarism. "Listen, how could it be plagiarism? I can't even remember the name of the magazine where I read it." Not so good. Lousy. In fact, to put the proper movie-land tag on it, it stinks. Whatever else you may think about Hollywood, we have a mighty colourful vocabulary. A thing is either marvellous or it stinks. Magazines. Well, how about this, then? The editor shakes his head. "We've got so few ads this month I guess we'll have to pad the magazine out with reading matter." Better. A little better.

This may flop at the box office, but—I wonder how much Sam Goldwyn pays a gagman for writing the marvellous solecisms he pulls off. "A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on." A thing like that lives. It's permanent literature, like Andersen and Grimm and Shakespeare. I think I've got an idea for Walt Disney. Donald Duck in *The Ugly Duckling*. Can you imagine that tomato turning into a swan? It'll knock the schoolkids out in the aisle. Or how about this? A burlesque to be called *So What? and the Seven Dopes*. I guess maybe it stinks. Disney doesn't need me. He's doing all right as it is.

Once you're pegged at three-fifty—Maybe I never should have come to Hollywood. I figured I'd get me a nice pile of dough socked away and then pull out and build myself a little shack somewhere and really go to town on a novel. That first novel of mine got pretty good notices, even if it did sell only three hundred copies. Maybe that publisher phonied up his ledgers. It doesn't seem possible that a swell book like that only sold three hundred copies. You can't trust publishers farther than you can kick a pumpkin. In fact you can't trust anybody. Just the same that was a pretty good book. The guy on the *Des Moines Chronicle* said it showed a remarkable knack for anecdote and plot manipulation and was full of quiet humour. But you can't feed yourself and send money home to a hard-drinking grandmother on the royalty from three hundred copies of a book. I've been here two years, and what a pile of dough I've saved! Twenty bucks from Jerry till payday.

Maybe I ought to do a couple of pages of dialogue; it may be an artistic flop, but it's certainly going to be a success at the box office. The truth is, I ought to pull out of here when my contract is up and go over to Paramount. They say a writer gets a chance over there to do a screen play without having it torn to confetti by the director, the assistant cameraman and the gatekeeper. On the other hand, I know what I've got here.

Maybe I'll get ambitious and work up an original in my spare time for Charlie Chan. *Charlie Chan in Hollywood*. A star is shot on the set. A gun with a silencer is concealed in the camera lens. Everybody suspects the cameraman but Charlie Chan, so you know right away somebody else must have done it. We'll make it the script writer, who thinks the star stinks and will ruin his picture. The characters and events depicted in this motion picture are entirely fictitious, and the names of real persons are never knowingly used. Maybe I ought to write a couple of pages of dialogue.

Or what a script writer thinks about. This is what a script writer thinks about: that damned dame. She thinks I can put her in the movies. Me. I am lucky I can put myself in the movies. Everything is going along fine, and then sex rears its ugly head. She thinks all you have to do to get into pictures is to flop on some guy's couch and zingo! your name is up in lights on the marquee of the Capital Theatre in New York. Phooey. Maybe I could talk Frankie into mugging her for a screen test, but what the hell, I'm just as human as the next bird. You'd like to be loved for yourself alone and not because these screwballs think they can use you. Say, that wouldn't make a bad Grade B a-tall! Maybe I'll write it up. Dame puts herself at the mercy of movie producer (I'll make myself a producer in this picture—dramatic licence.)

But this producer has ideals. Aw, the hell with it. No audience'd swallow a story about a movie producer with ideals. The hell with it. I guess it stinks.

Think I'll call up Eddie Hollis and see what's new. "Operator, get me Hollywood 1251. No—one two *five* one. That's right. Warners'? Scenario. Scenario, operator. No—*scenario*. Where the people sit at typewriters and write. Yes, the place where they write the stories that appear on the screen. Who do I want? Mr. Hollis, Edward Hollis. *Hollis*. Like in—in Hollis. Hello. Hello. What number do I want? Look, operator—I had my number once. Hollywood 1251. Thank you. Hello, good morning, this is Warner Brothers—I mean I want to speak to Ed Hollis in scenario. Say, do we have to go all through that again? The name is Hollis. Do you remember that picture at Sid Grauman's last week, *Isn't Love Lovely?* Yes, well this fellow I'm talking about wrote it. Edward R. Hollis Thanks. Yes, I'll hold the line. De, de, de, do, do. Bei mir bist du schön, please let me exp—Uh. Hello. Hollis? Ed Hollis? Yes, I'm holding the line. Oh, hello, hello. What? Oh, he's not in? Thanks."

Hell, it isn't eleven o'clock yet. An hour till lunch. Maybe I'll go over and inhale a slug of Java. No—been drinking too much coffee lately. The lining of my stomach feels as though I'd swallowed a live canary. Maybe I can use that line. Better jot it down. Suppose I ought to write a couple of pages of dialogue. Anybody thinks holding down a job in Hollywood is a cinch just doesn't realise what us guys go through. Producers: Give us a story like *The Front Page*. Or *Ben Hur*. Or *Hamlet*. Or *One Night of Love*. Directors: I can't film that damn scene: it's not visual. Cameramen: This is a camera, not an X-ray machine; people can't guess what's going on inside a character's head. Stars: It just won't play. I'm telling you. Edwin Booth himself couldn't read those lines. Phooey. One of the best lines show business ever produced: "Don't tell me how to play juveniles! I've been playing juveniles for thirty years."

Then the critics, who never fail to help make a box office flop of an artistic success by hollering the fact out as loud as they can shout; this may be a flop at the box office, but it's certainly going to be an artistic success. A guy sits here and writes his heart out, and what happens? Every seat in the theatre is jammed: Giant Screeno Tonite $200 Jackpot. Phooey.

Well, how about this, then, when a comedy treatment comes along? Some wag hangs a sign on the wall of a convent: Boy Wanted. No so bad, but the Hays office would knock that into a cocked hat. Offensive to religious orders. Didn't religious orders have a sense of humour? It was all in fun. They probably had, but people weren't supposed to know it. There you had the subtle distinction—a distinction for which the Hays office was constantly taking the rap.

What I really ought to do is to get out of Hollywood. I've got things to say, if I ever get the chance to say them. The Great American Novel never will be written so long

as I'm stuck in this hell-hole. Build myself a comfortable little shack somewhere up in the hills and—Telephone.

Probably an insurance agent. "Hello. Yes, this is he." (Boy, am I grammatical!) "Hello. Yes. I said this is he." Then the line goes dead. Nuts. "Hello?" Better hold on. Maybe the producer. "Hello! Yes, I'm holding the line." Bei mir bist du—"Yeah, it's me, I told you." Waste of time handing these screwball operators any ritzy grammar. "Oh, hello. Hello. Who? Oh—Ed Hollis. Say, that's a funny one. I was just trying to get you. I called the studio. You've been there all morning? Well, you're either unapproachable, or nobody knows you work there. Me? I'm fine. How's yourself, Ed? That's good. Huh? Oh, nothing much lately. Same old grind. They keep me pretty busy over here. What's new? Nothing much with me either. No, I've been catching up on my sleep. No. Nope. Nn, nn. Seen Jack? Oh, he has? Well, why don't you run up some night? Yeah. Sure. I'd like to, Ed. Been keeping my nose pretty much to the grindstone. No. Okay, Ed. Sure, I'll give you a ring. Okay, Ed. So long. Okay, Okay, Ed. So long."

Eleven-thirty. Guess I'll call up Phil.

"Extension two-nine-three, please. That's right. Hello. Phil? Yeah. Me. Let's go outside for lunch to-day. I'm fed up on that studio restaurant. Yeah, it stinks. How about the Wilshire Brown Derby? Well, suppose we do kill a couple of hours. So what? I'm sick of working my can off every day around here. Meet you at the gate at 12. Okay, Phil. Okay. So long."

Maybe I could get in a couple of pages of dialogue before lunch time. Let's see.

All the events depicted herein are entirely fictitious; the characters of real persons are never knowingly used, and how! An "original" is a story you can't remember where the hell you read. After an idea had been used by three or more studios it became the property of the public domain. How about writing the biography of a story idea? One of the big magazine serial boys comes across it in Montaigne, who got it, probably, from Boccaccio. It is put in up-to-date togs and garnished with parsley and served up to the ladies' home companions. The book hits the best-seller lists, and Kaufman dramatises it for Broadway. Metro buys it. Columbia sneaks it into a picture they're shooting, R.K.O. gives it a new twist, and Warners disguise it in a costume picture. Metro decides to make a musical out of it and calls in Ben Hecht. Universal works it into their latest sea story.

Finally Monogram makes the awful half of a double-feature bill out of it. Oh, well. It's all in fun. Maybe it wasn't an artistic success, but it was certainly B.O. Then the producer calls you up and says we want something new and dynamic, like that picture *The Blue Angel*, with Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich, pronounced Marlayna Daytrish.

Damn, but the time passes slowly. Might as well go down and play the slot machines and see if I can hit the jackpot while I'm waiting for Phil. No use letting them work your can off. I'll whack out a couple of pages of dialogue this afternoon. This may be a flop at the box office, but it's certainly going to be an artistic success. People just don't know what a script writer is up against. I'll get sore some day and pull stakes the hell out of here and write the Great American Novel—in a pig's eye! Mustn't forget to bum that twenty from Jerry.

Better stick a couple of pages of typescript on top of the desk; make 'em think you've been sweating over the job. Trouble is, once you're pegged at three-fifty, just try and get a raise. Oh, well. It's buttons, but it's better than going hungry.

Holy cripes! I've forgotten to read the *Hollywood Reporter!* Dammit, you just don't get a minute to yourself around this joint.

Some day I'll just get up and walk out on this racket. The trouble with pictures is, they stink.

Oh, well.

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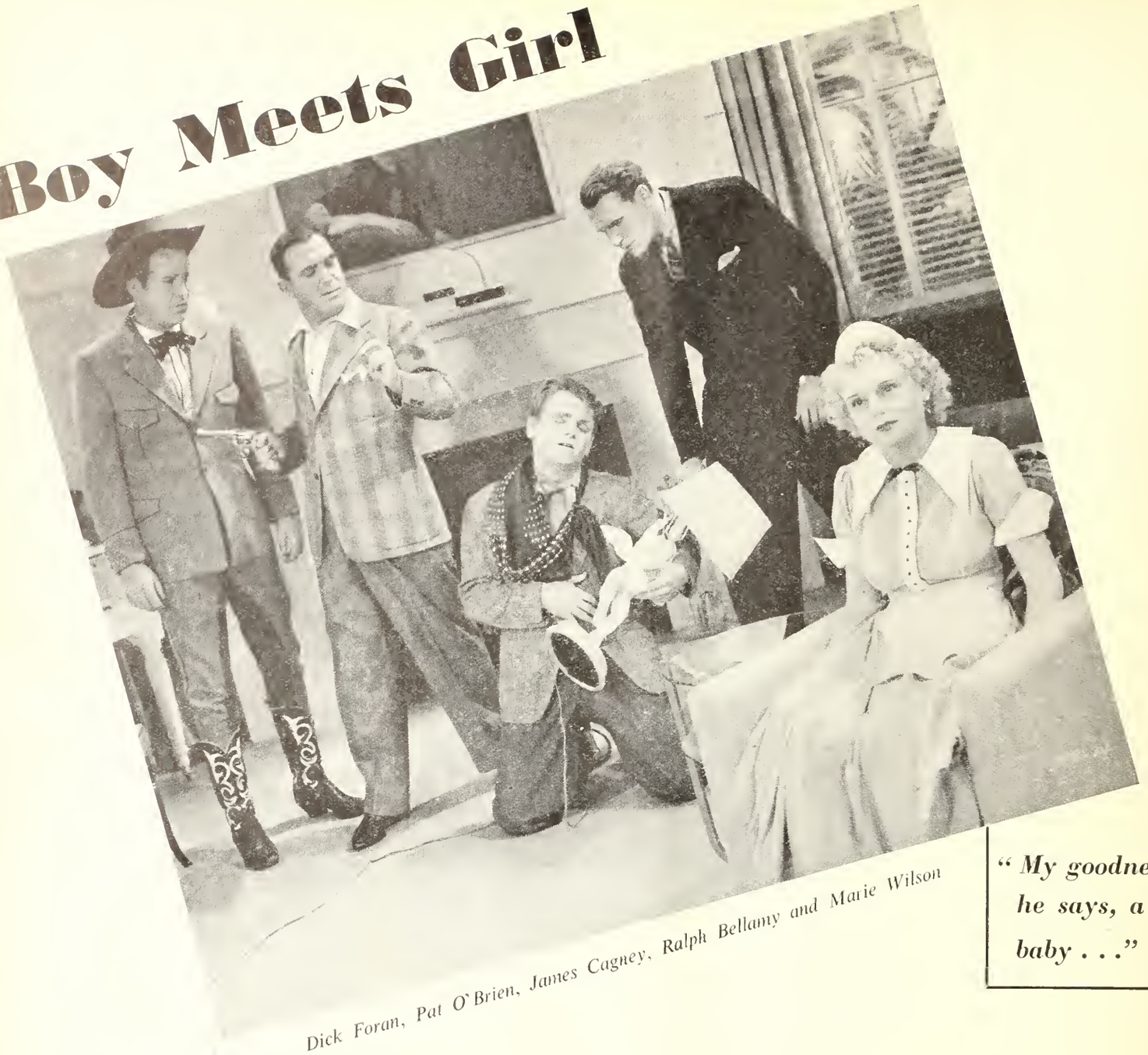
Boy Meets Girl



Dick Foran, Pat O'Brien, James Cagney, Ralph Bellamy and Marie Wilson

" My goodness, he says, a baby . . ."

Robert Law and J. Carlyle Benson, Hollywood script writing team, are discussing with Larry Toms, horse opera star, and Rosetti, his agent, the plot for Larry's next picture. Larry Toms is seated in a chair, listening with a puzzled and dissatisfied expression; Rosetti is standing, biting at a cigar, very intense and vacuous; and Benson is dozing on a couch.

LAW: . . . and this bozo comes up to you and you look him straight in the eye and you say, "Why, darn your soul, I loved her before you ever married her." Then the dame comes in and she cries: "Larry, I heard everything you said." . . . and you just look at her, and there's a long pause—*a long pause*—and then, finally, you say, "*Did you?*" That's all—just a plain, quiet, simple, "Did you?" (*he falls on the couch*). Boy, what a moment!

LARRY: Yeah, but what's the story about?

BENSON: Love.

LAW (*singing*) "Love is the sweetest thing."

LARRY: Now, come on boys—get off the couch. This ain't fair. I got a lot at stake in this picture. It's the last one in my contract. If I get a poor story I'm out in the cold.

LAW: Shivering with a million dollar annuity.

LARRY (*controlling himself*): Tell me your story in a few simple words.

LAW: Mr. Benson, what's our story?

BENSON: How do I know? You told it.

LAW: Didn't you listen?

BENSON: No. We ought to have a stenographer.

LAW: But they won't wear tights. And I can't dictate to a stenographer who won't wear tights.

LARRY: Where's C. Elliot Friday? He's the producer. He ought to be here. I've been listenin' to this story for two hours. What's it about?

LAW: Don't speak to me. You don't like our story.

LARRY: I didn't say I didn't like it. I couldn't follow it.

BENSON: The only thing you could follow is the trail of a lonesome horse.

BENSON: Listen, I've been writing stories for eleven years. Boy meets girl. Boy loses girl. Boy gets girl.

LAW: Or—girl meets boy. Girl loses boy. Girl gets boy. Love will find a way. Love never loses. Put your money on love. You can't lose. I'm getting hungry.

ROSETTI: If I make a point, I don't think you're showing the proper respect to one of the biggest stars in this studio.

LARRY: Just because I don't get Dick Powell's fan mail don't mean I ain't got his following. A lot of those that want to write me—ain't never learned how to write.

The Spewack stage success *Boy Meets Girl* has been filmed. James Cagney has returned to Warner Bros. to play Robert Law; Pat O'Brien is J. Carlyle Benson, and Marie Wilson plays Susie.

Last month we published advance stills from the film version of this famous satire on Hollywood. The interest aroused was such that we feel sure our readers will enjoy the extracts printed below from the film script.

★ ★ ★

LAW: Benson, injustice has been done. We've been lacking in respect for the idol of illiteracy.

BENSON: Do we apologise?

LAW: No.

ROSETTI: Well, let me tell you something—before I became an agent I taught diction. And Larry Toms is potentially the greatest actor I ever met. I can prove it—with X-rays. (*He fumbles with his brief-case and extracts X-ray photographs.*) I was just taking them up to show B.K. He's got the Barrymore Larynx. I'll put his larynx alongside of John Barrymore's and I defy you to tell me which is which.

LARRY: I couldn't tell myself and it's my own larynx. (*Rosetti has given the X-rays to Benson.*)

BENSON: Say, are you sure this is his larynx?

ROSETTI: Gentlemen, I wouldn't be surprised with the proper training, if Larry couldn't sing. That opens up the whole field of musicals.

BENSON (*to Law*): What are we waiting for?

LAW: Lunch.

LARRY (*roaring*): I'm getting fed up with this. I got writers who are just plain crazy—a producer who can't concentrate and ain't even here—and—

ROSETTI: Now, now, Larry, don't lose your temper.

LARRY: The idea of writers gettin' fifteen hundred a week for actin' like hoodlums!

LAW: I agree with you.

LARRY: Huh?

LAW: We're not writers. We're hacks. If we weren't, would I be sitting here listening to your inarticulate grunts?

LARRY: Aw.

LAW: That's exactly what I mean. For two cents I'd take the next train back to Vermont.

BENSON: Will you forget Vermont?

LAW (*indicating Larry*): I wouldn't have to sit around with *that* in Vermont. I'd write. Really write.

BENSON: Yeah, I know.

LAW: I wrote once. I wrote a book—a darned good book. I was a promising young novelist. I almost got the Pulitzer prize in 1930. And in 1937 I'm writing dialogue for a *horse!* (*points to Larry.*)

LARRY: Now, listen——

ROSETTI: Larry—Larry, take a deep breath. The boys mean no harm.

ROSETTI: Exhale! (*Larry slowly exhales.*)

LAW (*sniffing*): I smell carbon exhaust.

LARRY: One more crack, that's all—just one more crack.

(*Enter C.F.*)

LARRY: Hello, Mr. Friday. We've been waiting for you. Listen——

C.F.: Good morning, good morning. (*Seating himself at desk.*) Boys, no antics please. We've got a heavy day ahead of us. (*Picks up phone.*) Miss Crews, I don't want to be disturbed by anybody—understand? And order some lunch. A plate of raw carrots, and a bottle of certified raw milk. See that it's *raw*. Bring enough for everybody.

LAW: (*talking into telephone*) Just a minute. Benson and Law want two cups of chicken broth, some ham hocks, cabbage, lemon meringue pie, and some bicarbonate of soda.

C.F.: You're slaughtering yourselves, boys. You won't be able to think with that poison in your stomachs. And we've got to think. I've just seen B.K., boys; this studio is facing a crisis.

ROSETTI: Any truth in the report, C.F., that Elstree-British wants to buy the studio?

C.F.: You know as much about it as I do, Rosetti.

LAW: Why sell? I thought we were sitting pretty. We're in receivership.

ROSETTI: Well, I'm going up to see B.K. I hope you boys get a good story for Larry. (*He goes out.*)

C.F. (*more freely*): As a matter of fact, you may as well know it. There may be a reorganisation.

BENSON: Again?

C.F.: And you know my position. I'm the only college-bred man in the studio. They resent me.

LAW: The big snobs.

C.F.: Just because I've always tried to do something fine, something dignified, something worth while—I'm being hammered on all sides. (*Impressively*) Boys, if my next picture fails, I'm out. And you're out, Larry. And it won't do you two boys any good either. Of course—(*a little bitterly*) you can always write plays.

LAW: I don't see why not. We never wrote any.

C.F.: I have an idea for a play I want to discuss with you some time. You'll be wild about it. Just one set—simple to produce and practically anybody can play it. Katherine Cornell would be marvellous for the girl. She dies in the first act.

LARRY (*angrily*): Listen here, Mr. Friday, I ain't in the theatre. What about my picture.

C.F.: Boys, we need a big picture. Not just a good story. I want to do something fine—with sweep, with scope—stark, gripping—but with plenty of laughs and a little hokum. Something we'll be proud of. Not just another, but *the* picture of the year. A sort of Charge of the Light Brigade, but as Kipling would have done it.

Susie the waitress, enters, carrying the lunch.

LAW (*running to her*): Lunch!

BENSON: Grub! Susie, I love you.

C.F.: Wait a minute—wait a minute——

(*Benson takes tray from Susie.*)

SUSIE (*weakly*): Please, Mr. Benson, be careful.

LAW: Put that tray right down here.

SUSIE: Thanks—it's not very heavy (*she then collapses on the floor*).

C.F.: Good gad!

LAW (*bending over Susie*): Susie—Susie—

BENSON (*excitedly into phone*): Get the doctor over here right away.

LAW: Somebody give me water—

C.F. (*looking down disapprovingly*): This is a nice thing to happen in my office. Who is this girl, anyway?

LAW (*giving glass of water to Susie*): Come on, Susie (*lifts her head to glass*).

LARRY: That commissary shouldn't employ people with epilepsy.

C.F.: I had an actor who did that to me once. Held up my shooting schedule fourteen days.

SUSIE (*opening her eyes*): Did you all get napkins?

BENSON: Now Susie—get into this chair.

SUSIE: Thank you.

C.F.: What's wrong with you, young lady?

SUSIE: Nothing. I'm much better now. Thanks.

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C.F.: Where's that doctor?

SUSIE: Did you call for a doctor? You didn't have to.

C.F.: Do you get these epileptic fits often?

SUSIE: I didn't have an epileptic fit.

C.F.: Then what's wrong with you?

SUSIE: There's nothing wrong—it's only natural.

C.F.: Only natural for you to come into my office and collapse on the floor?

SUSIE: Oh, no, sir. It's only natural when you're going to have a baby.

C.F. (*into phone*): Tell that doctor not to come—You heard me—I don't want him (*hangs up*). I won't have my office converted into a maternity ward! I don't think much of your husband—letting you work at a time like this!

(*It is clear that Susie has no husband*).

SUSIE (*rising*): You'd better eat your lunch before it gets cold. Have you all got napkins?

BENSON: Take it easy, Susie.

LAW: The new generation! "You'd better eat your lunch," she says. "It's only natural," she says. Susie, you are magnificent.

SUSIE: I'm quitting at the end of the week so I thought I'd tell everybody why. I wouldn't want them to think I was discontented.

LAW: Our little mother! Our little mother!

SUSIE: Oh, don't make fun of me.

LAW: Fun? I've never been so touched in my life. Susie I feel purified.

BENSON: Susie—can we be god-father?

SUSIE: Do you mean it?

BENSON: Do we mean it? Just say "yes", and see how quick I get Mark Hellinger to print: "Benson and Law are god-fathering in June!"

SUSIE: Oh, I think that would be wonderful for Happy to have writers for a god-father.

BENSON: Happy?

SUSIE: I'm going to call him Happy—even if he's a girl. Because I want him to be happy—even if he's a girl.

BENSON: Beautiful! A beautiful thought! Where are you going to have this baby, Susie?

SUSIE: In the County Hospital. It's all fixed. I was very lucky because I've only lived in the county three months and I'm not eligible.

C.F.: Now, listen, boys. I've had enough of this.

LAW (*at phone*): Give me the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital—and make it snappy!

BENSON (*slapping Law on the back*): We've got a baby!

C.F.: Just a minute—hang up that phone!

LAW (*into phone*): Dr. Barx, please. Willy, this is Law of Benson and Law. Reserve the best suite in the house for us. I'm serious! Dead serious. A little friend of ours is going to need you pretty soon, and we want the best service you've got in stock.

BENSON: Day and night nurse.

LAW (*to Benson*): And not the one with the buck teeth, either. She's dynamite. (*Into phone*) We want everything that Joan Blondell had—only double—What's that? Bill? Bill the studio of course.

C.F. You'll do no such thing! What kind of a gag is this?

Miss Crews enters, followed by two men with trumpets.

MISS CREWS: Do you want to hear the trumpet call? The men are here. Music Department wants your O.K.

C.F.: Trumpets?

MISS CREWS: For "Young England".

C.F.: Look here. I haven't time to listen to you now. Come back here at two o'clock. And give it to me from out there. I don't want you blasting in my ear.

MISS CREWS: Yes, Mr. Friday. (*The three exit.*)

C.F.: Now, boys, let's get together on this. (*To Susie.*) And you—what are you sitting here for? Get out!

Susie tries to rise.

LAW (*to Susie*): Sit right where you are. (*At C.F.*) Don't you bark at our inspiration! We've got it!

C.F.: Huh? What?

LAW (*with mounting excitement*): A baby!

C.F.: Boys, I'm a patient man, but you're trying me.

"Our little Mother . . ."

BENSON (*excitedly*): *Larry Toms and a baby!*

LAW (*to C.F.*): Do you see it? He is startled.

LARRY: Wait a minute—wait a minute—

LAW: He finds a baby in the Rockies—

BENSON: Girl with a no-good gambler—out of Las Vegas—has a baby—gambler is killed. Girl leaves baby on ranger's doorstep. Larry is the ranger—He finds the baby.

BENSON: A baby!

LAW: My goodness, he says, 'a baby!'

BENSON: The most precious thing in life!

LAW: The cutest goldarn little thumbsucker you ever saw—

BENSON: Tugging at every mother's heart—and every potential mother—

LAW: And who isn't?

BENSON: A love story between Larry and the baby!

LAW: The Two Outcasts!

BENSON: And then he meets the mother—

LAW: She wants her baby back.

BENSON: She's reached the end of her tether.

LAW: She hasn't even got a tether.

BENSON: The man she loved—let her down. She hates men—all men.

LAW: She won't look at Larry.

BENSON: No—there she sits—bitter, brooding, cynical—but underneath a mother's heart.

LAW: Out on the Rockies—

BENSON: The heck with the Rockies! He's in the Foreign Legion!

LAW: Right! Larry's joined to forget. He's out on the march. We can use all that stock stuff. And he finds a baby—

BENSON: He's gone off to fight the Riffs.

LAW: The heck with the Riffs! Ethiopians!

BENSON: Stick to the Riffs. We don't want any race problems.

LAW: She doesn't know if he's coming back—

BENSON: She's waiting—waiting—

LAW: Cut to the Riffs. Cut back—into the battle. His father's Colonel—

BENSON: Talk about Kipling—

LAW: Talk about scope—sweep—what a set-up!

BENSON: A love story!

LAW: A great love story! (*enraptured*) The Virgin of the Foreign Legion and the West Point man who wanted to forget!

BENSON: The baby brings them together, splits them apart, brings them together—

LAW: Boy meets girl—

BENSON: Boy loses girl—

LAW: Boy gets girl—

C.F. springs up and bangs desk.

C.F.: Boys, I think you've got something! Let's go up and try it on B.K. while it's hot.

Larry strides forward, advancing on C.F.

LARRY: Wait a minute! You can't act with a baby. They steal every scene.

LAW: Are you selling motherhood short?

* * *

(*They go to B.K., head of the studio.*)

LAW: The Cowboy and the Baby!

BENSON: The sweetest story ever told!

LAW: Combines the best features of motherhood and horse-operas.

C.F.: I suppose we could get Baby LeMaire. He's about due for a comeback.

LAW: *That* has been? Nonsense—that's the point of the whole thing—we're going to have a new-born baby.

BENSON: Brand new.

LAW: We're going to watch that baby—the first hair—the first tooth—the first smile—

BENSON: The same baby—no switching. First time in the history of pictures. That baby's going to grow before your eyes.

LAW: Open up like a flower—

BENSON: Minute he's born we set the cameras on him.

B.K.: He ain't *born* yet? Can I make a contract with a possibility?

LARRY: The whole idea's crazy. Do you expect a big star like me to support a baby?

BENSON: You've supported a whole lot of horses. This is a step up.

LAW: Can't you see it, B.K.? The publicity angle along—Imagine the headlines!—"A Star Is Born!"

BENSON: That's a good title, Law. Too bad they just used it.

LAW: The baby's going to gurgle and google and drool his way to stardom.

B.K. (*after slight deliberation*): Boys, I think you've got something . . . .

SMALL TOWN MAN

Walt Disney's rise to screen fame told by H. E. BLYTH

With the completion of his first full-length film, "Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs," Walt Disney reached the highest point in his screen career.

Here is an exclusive sketch of his life and work, of his early difficulties and problems; of his first attempts at film-cartooning, and his rise from peanut pedlar to screen cartoonist number one.

And something, too, about the moneyed interests behind the cheery little figure of Mickey Mouse. Born of the memory of a studio mouse caught and tamed, the little mouse in a pair of gay, rakish, red pants now represents a considerable dollar turnover, the possible effects of which are discussed in this article.

THE time is not yet ripe for a biography of Walt Disney. At this present moment, in the late nineteen-thirties, his career, it must seem to many, has only just begun.

New developments, in colour and sound, may be just around the corner; new ideas, new fantasies and new characters have yet to be born. The next five or ten years may well see revolutionary changes in his work. Yet to some critics of the cinema his star seems on the wane, the first fine flush of joyous comedy and delicate fantasy already spent. We can as yet only speculate as to who is right. *Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs*, his first full-length picture, by its success may well prove the beginning of a new phase in film cartoons, a phase that may bring to our cinemas whole programmes in which the figures are but the creations of man's imagination, or by its failure may kill much of the promise that these cartoons now hold.

But one point remains certain. If Disney were to cease production to-morrow, his place would be secure in the history of the film. His little comedies and fantasies could be projected in years to come and give as much pleasure as they do to-day, and Mickey's ingenuity, the bravado of the Three Little Pigs and Donald Duck's raucous squawk have already attained film immortality.

"Mickey Mouse," said Low, cartoonist of *The Evening Standard*, when introducing a lecturer on Disney's work, "is the only public figure in the world to-day who is universally beloved." Therein lies much of the greatness of Disney's work—he can bring pleasure to people of all classes, all nationalities and all ages. Whether it be Mickey Mouse, Michel

Souris, Michael Maus or Miguel Ratonocito who appears on the screen, he can still command shouts of delight from the audience, for Disney, even more than Chaplin, has discovered the secret of international appeal. That is not to say that he may not lose it—satire, especially of the American scene, will not be universally understood, and satire, if it becomes bitter, may in the end prove his undoing, just as it nearly proved the undoing of Clair; but so long as he retains his kindliness, his simplicity and his wonderful sense of fun, he and Mickey Mouse will remain two of the world's most beloved characters.

There are other cartoonists in the cinema, and much of their work is good and not a little excellent, but they all must realise that Disney is their master in ingenuity, in fantasy and in the personality of the characters he creates. It would be absurd to contrast Stinkie the Skunk or Oswald the Rabbit with Donald Duck or Mickey Mouse; they are but nonentities compared to the inhabitants of Disney's little world. Only Pop-Eye The Sailor has the individuality of a Disney character, but Pop-Eye is only one, and Disney has created a dozen personalities equally unique, such as the Three Little Pigs, the Big Bad Wolf, the Goof, and that most well-meaning and effusive of hounds, Pluto.

The standard he has set for himself is so high, with little masterpieces like *Lullaby Land*, *Three Little Pigs*, *The Band Concert*, and the truly exquisite *Water Babies*, that he must inevitably fall far below this standard, by comparison, in much of his work.

His present output of eighteen pictures a year—nine Mickey Mouse cartoons and nine Silly Symphonies—makes sustained brilliance quite impossible. We could wish that they might be limited to half that number, but the demands of cinemas all over the world make that impossible. But mediocrity is a dangerous canker in any artist's work. It may spread and one day envelope the whole. Granted that, to a degree, it is inevitable, its presence is yet alarming.

Disney and his studio are a part of a commercialised, money-making industry which has little time for fantasies and fairies unless they have box-office appeal. To the writer nothing in the cinema is more saddening than the knowledge of the enormous vested interests paraded behind the friendly, good-natured little figure of Mickey Mouse. Over three hundred firms in Europe and America have used Mickey to increase sales turnover, and have found his power in this respect amazingly successful; Mickey Mouse books have been wonderfully successful, the story of the Three Little Pigs being published in three different languages, while the *Mickey Mouse Weekly* has a circulation which would shame many a famous periodical. Connected to the Disney organisation, especially to the commercial side, are many very shrewd financial brains. They could not tell you anything about the artistic value of a Silly Symphony, but they know to a sixpence the trade value of Mickey's face on a firm's goods. The ugly shadow of the dollar looms up behind that cheery little form.

To understand Disney's work, it is necessary to know something of his life and character, since the reasons for his love of simplicity, of fantasy and of animals become easy to understand when considered in the light of his childhood and upbringing. He has been described as "a small town man, who has read very little, seen very little, heard very little." That is an important point to be remembered when discussing the satirical side of his work.

Here is no city "slicker" who may delight in gibing at the weaknesses of his fellows, for he is still essentially "a small town man" whose delight is in simple things. Of slight build and average height (5ft. 8in. to be exact), with light brown hair and dark brown eyes, he is a shy, unimposing figure with little love for the limelight and personal publicity. His is a dual personality, for besides being himself, he is also Mickey Mouse. To him these are two entirely different entities. When he adopts that funny, squeaky voice and nervous little laugh, bashfully courting the tantalising Minnie or sternly telling Pluto to behave, it is not Disney that speaks but Mickey himself. He ceases to be Disney but becomes instead a small mouse with a kindly heart and goodwill to all men.

Actually the two are not so very different. Mickey, when all is said and done, is not a very imposing fellow, any more than is Disney, and although he is far more quick-witted and ingenious than Pluto or the Goof, he has never had Donald Duck's swagger, bounce and conceit. You could probably impose upon both, but both have determination and neither know when they are beaten; fate has given each of them some hard knocks, and both have always come up smiling.

Disney has always, and probably will always, be "broke." All the money he earns goes back into the business. His brother Roy is his financial adviser, and he it is who handles the business administration of the studio. Yet despite his lack of interest in money matters, Disney has a strange knack of being right, a fact of which his studio is now well aware, since the making of both coloured Silly Symphonies in general and the *Three Little Pigs* in particular were both strongly opposed by members of his staff.

Walt Disney was born in Chicago on December 5th, 1901, of an Irish-Canadian father and a German-American mother. He has three brothers and one sister, none of whom have ever evinced any interest in art. Possibly he inherited his love of fantasy and his imagination from the mixture of German and Irish in his blood, the Grimm tradition in his mother allied with the nimbleness of Irish thought, although neither of his parents were in any way artistically inclined, but whatever the reason, Disney as a boy had always but two ambitions—either to become an artist or to go on the stage.

His grammar school days started in a country school in Marceline, Missouri, and were continued at Benton Grammar School in Kansas City, spiritual home of the Middle West, and later at the McKinley High School in Chicago. In Kansas City, from the age of nine to fifteen, Disney delivered newspapers from 3.30 to 6 a.m. every morning before going to school, but despite these long hours he found time to interest himself in matters apart from work and education, and while at Benton he did Charlie Chaplin impersonations at neighbourhood theatres, and won cash prizes amounting to a dollar or even two! Like René Clair, admiration for Chaplin has played an important part in his screen career.

Much of his early life seems to have been spent alternating between Kansas City and Chicago. In the McKinley High School he attended the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts night school, and studied cartooning under Leroy Gossitt, then of the old *Chicago Herald* staff.

In 1917, he began work as a newsboy and general pedlar on a train running out of Kansas City, selling peanuts, candy and magazines, and balancing precariously on the steps of the train as it pulled in and out of the stations.

In the summer of 1918, when the war had brought about a shortage of labour, Disney got a job in Chicago as a postman, but in September of that year he joined the American Red Cross as a chauffeur, after a wholesale rejection by the Enlistment offices for being too young (he was still not yet seventeen), and, after a short period of training, was sent to France, where he stayed for a year.

By the autumn of 1919 he was back in Kansas City, and it is here, with his employment by the Gray Advertising Company of that city, drawing hens and eggs for agricultural catalogues, that his career may be said to begin. Within a few months he had been "fired", but after one or two reversals he started work for the Kansas City Slide Co., making animated advertising films, and experimenting in his spare time in a little home-made studio in his father's garage. His employer at the slide company, A. V. Cauger, gave his blessing to these nocturnal experiments, and in due course the very first Disney cartoon, *Red Riding Hood*, came into being in these restricted surroundings. History does not relate what that cartoon was like—an enterprising cinema-owner could cause something of a flutter if he could discover a print of it and show it to-day—and we do not know how it compared with the Red Riding Hood of the Silly Symphonies. Was the Big Bad Wolf as ferocious and cunning as his polo-playing successor, did his jaws drip and his teeth gnash as alarmingly, and was his discomfiture in the end as complete? And did any of those who saw that early work ever pause to consider what the future of this young man might be? Did any foresee a Disney studio in Hollywood making cartoons that lasted only seven minutes on the screen, yet which cost £10,000 to make and were shown in cinemas all over the world? Probably not, for although Disney threw up his regular job when *Red Riding Hood* was completed, and although he did get some encouragement from certain firms, and formed a company of his own to produce fairy tale cartoons, by the summer of 1923 he was practically penniless and his future in Kansas City seemed blank.

In August he shook its dust from his feet and set out for Hollywood with his train-fare, an old suit (full of holes), a sweater and about forty dollars in cash. Another young man had gone West to seek his fortune.

With him went his brother Roy, a comparative plutocrat with no less than 250 dollars to his credit.

The Seven Dwarfs [*RKO Radio*]

Now animated cartoons were no novelty in the cinema at that time. We are told that as early as 1906 a Yorkshireman, J. Stuart Blackton, made a cartoon comedy called *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* for the Vitagraph Company, and by 1911 Windsor McCay, a prolific and most painstaking artist, was drawing as many as 4,000 pictures for his cartoons in order to get smoothness of movement, and it was McCay who, in the summer of 1918, produced a topical cartoon of 25,000 drawings depicting the sinking of the *Lusitania*. In 1917 Max Fleischer started the *Out of the Inkwell* series and created his famous Koko the Clown, and Koko and Pat Sullivan's Felix the Cat were probably the most famous cartoon characters of the early post-war cinema. Fleischer's work was a combination of photo and cartoon, of real human beings and cartoon characters, a system later adopted by Disney in his "Alice" series.

Meanwhile, William B. Hearst, of the International Feature Syndicate, a great advocate of the "comic strip," placed Gregory La Cava, the famous director, in charge of an Animated Cartoon section, and under his leadership were produced *Jerry on the Job*, *Bringing Up Father*, *Krazy Kat* and other pictures. Also to this period, 1917–1920, belong the *Mutt and Jeff* series, made by Budd Fisher, and *The Terry Cartoon Burlesques*.

So when Disney arrived in Hollywood with his forty dollars, his suit full of holes, his sweater and high hopes, he was bringing no novelty to the film colony. Animated cartoons were already well known to cinema managers, serving either as "fillers" in a programme, oddments thrown in to make the session last the required length of time, or else (if they were bad enough) as "chasers", since the poverty of their inspiration forced a reluctant audience out of the cinema and room was thus made for others.

So in Hollywood Disney made little progress, and it was not until a copy of one of his cartoons was sent to New York (he could not afford to take it himself) that things began to look brighter. Winkler, an independent distributor, engaged him to make cartoons, and the "Alice" series, based on *Alice in Wonderland*, was begun. During his association with Winkler, Disney made over sixty "Alice" cartoons, and later, in 1927, a cartoon animal character was born (for Alice was a real little girl who merely played in a cartoon world), and Oswald the Rabbit came into being. Twenty-six Oswald cartoons were made, and then Winkler and Disney quarrelled. Oswald had done well and Disney hoped for more money for improvement, but to this Winkler would not agree. The partnership had lasted four years, and when the split came Disney and his wife were in New York and his brother Roy was managing his affairs in Hollywood. Winkler took several of the best men from Disney's organisation and started in on his own, producing a second series of Oswald cartoons. Oswald is still to be seen in Walter Lantz's cartoons, which are released by Universal, a pleasant enough little fellow but with none of the personality with which Disney could have endowed him.

On the train back from New York to Hollywood, Mickey Mouse was born. Disney had always had a fondness for mice, and when he was working in Kansas City he used often to catch them in the waste-paper baskets around the studio, and would keep them in a cage on his desk. One little mouse was far tamer than the rest and he it was who sowed the seeds of a mouse cartoon series in Disney's mind.

On that train going back to Hollywood after the split with Winkler, Disney and his wife did some hard thinking. The situation was serious in the extreme. A new character was needed, a new personality whom the great movie-going public would at once take to their heart. And as the train reached the Middle-West, and memories came back of Kansas City and his little friends in the studio there, a mouse was born, a mouse in a pair of gay and rakish red-velvet pants with two enormous pearl buttons in the front, and by the time Los Angeles was reached, the first scenario had been written. Mickey Mouse had arrived and the world was completely unconcerned!

Not that he was even then called Mickey Mouse. Mortimer Mouse was the name originally adopted, and it was only later that it was discarded as being unsuitable.

Disney had still one or two Oswald cartoons to make under contract for Winkler, and the first Mickey Mouse had to be made in secret in consequence, so Disney's garage at his home was used privately as Mickey's studio.

But no sooner was Mickey born than another bombshell came to wreck Disney's plans, and not only Disney's but those of nearly every producer in Hollywood. "Mammy," wailed Al Jolson, "Oh, Mammy," and before anyone quite knew what had happened sound had arrived and the days of silent pictures were gone.

The first Mickey cartoon was completed and sent to New York, where the furore caused by *The Jazz Singer* was still at its height. Mickey, of course, was silent and nobody would look at him. The greatest star since Chaplin was hawked around the town and the producers to a man turned him down.

Meanwhile a second Mickey cartoon was being made in the Disney garage, but it became increasingly obvious that it must be synchronised with sound if it was to have a chance. Everyone was sound crazy and so it was decided that Mickey must talk. This synchronisation could not be done in Hollywood, and so, in August of 1928, a print of the third Mickey cartoon to be made, *Steamboat Willie*, was taken to New York by Disney, and after much difficulty and many disappointments (the cost of sound was prohibitive in those days) he met the good-natured Irishman, Pat Powers, who agreed to put sound to the film for a price that seemed reasonable and within Disney's slender means. The first synchronisation was disastrous, but after a little experimenting a very satisfactory result was obtained.

Distributors became interested at once, but a hitch arose when Disney refused to sell out his organisation (which then consisted of some twenty-five people, several of whom had originally worked for him in Kansas City). He wished to retain his individuality, and this

desire has been one of the greatest foundations for his success. He was determined to be independent and able to spend whatever he thought necessary on his work. He would not be hampered by studio policies.

Still, on September 19th, 1928, *Steamboat Willie* opened at the Colony Theatre in New York and caused a sensation. The Press were delighted and within a week it had moved to the Roxy Theatre. Even so it was impossible for Disney to make a deal on his own terms, so he decided to release Mickey on the independent market with the help and financial backing of Powers.

On his return to Hollywood, Disney decided to strike out on a new line, since both he and Powers were of the opinion that another series besides Mickey's should be produced, and thus the two series could be run in competitive houses. And so the first Silly Symphony was made, and in February, 1929, another Mickey, *The Opry House* and the first Silly Symphony, *The Skeleton Dance*, built on a musical theme, the "Danse Macabre", were taken to New York for sound recording. *The Opry House*, in which Mickey played Rachmaninoff's Prelude on the piano, was quite a success, but the Silly Symphony was not well received by cinema managers, who considered it far too gruesome. In the end it made its début in a Los Angeles cinema in July, 1929, and it, also, was an immediate success. This led to a booking at the Roxy Theatre in New York, and so by the summer of 1929 the position of both Mickey Mouse and the Silly Symphonies was secure.

At the beginning of 1930, Disney allowed Columbia to release his pictures, which they did until the summer of 1932, when they were then released by United Artists. In 1936 Disney signed for release by RKO.

After the success of Mickey Mouse and the Silly Symphonies in 1929, everything went smoothly for a year or two. Then Disney got a bee in his bonnet, or so it seemed to his studio staff. Colour began to attract him more and more. He had always wanted to make coloured cartoons, and by 1931 the idea was no longer an impracticable dream. Colour fascinated him. Here again he was not first in the field. The first cartoon in Technicolor (then a two-colour process) appeared in the introductory sequence to *The King of Jazz* on March 30th, 1930, and the first colour cartoon proper was Ted Eshbaugh's *Goofy Goat*, a complete cartoon story done in Multicolor and shown for the first time on July 6th, 1931.

The studio could not see eye to eye with Disney over this matter of colour. To begin with the cost of colouring cartoons was considerable and there seemed little chance of getting back the original outlay. Secondly the black-and-white cartoons were doing very nicely and extensive bookings had been made. Those who had booked cartoons in advance would probably be indignant if asked to pay more because some were to be made in colour.

Thirdly, and most important of all, the studio hadn't the capital.

But Disney persisted. The money question, he realised, was the chief problem. Then he thought of a little nest-egg which he had been accumulating against a rainy day. A subsidiary company, formed to market the rights for making Mickey Mouse dolls and toys, had made quite a handsome profit. Here was the money for colour. In the end the studio gave in. If the boss had set his heart on a colour cartoon, then let a colour cartoon be made.

It was made, was a Silly Symphony in Technicolor called *Flowers and Trees*, and was first shown in Hollywood on July 15th, 1932; it still remains one of the best things Disney has done. Nevertheless, it caused no great stir at the time, and although well received there seemed no reason to suppose that the coloured cartoon would in due course supersede the black-and-white entirely.

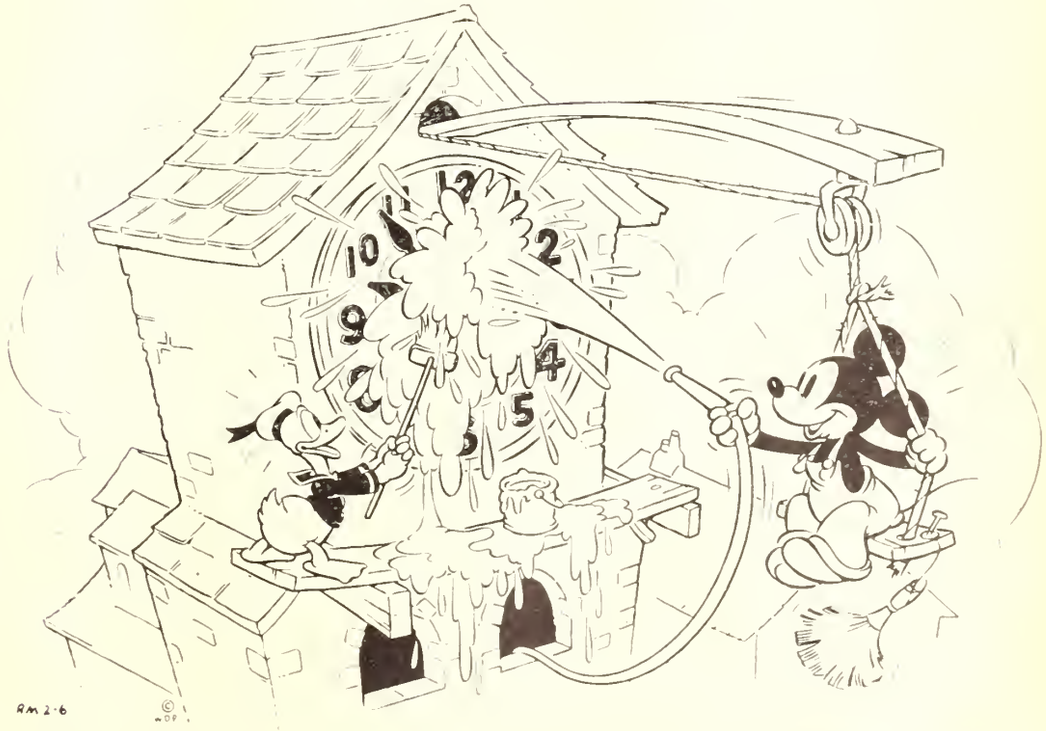
Two more coloured Silly Symphonies followed—*King Neptune* and *Babes in the Wood*—and then Disney got another bee in his bonnet. It buzzed and buzzed, and Disney repeatedly put forward his suggestion to the studio, who as often rejected it (for the Disney Studio is essentially run on a communalistic basis, and his ideas are rejected like anyone else's, if the staff do not consider them promising).

But Disney could not relinquish this new idea. Once again the staff gave in. If he had really set his heart on making a cartoon about three little pigs, then they might as well make one about three little pigs and make him happy. Frank Churchill, the studio's chief composer and conductor, since the advent of sound, wrote a little ditty to go with the film called "Who's afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf?" It was destined to become the first song hit ever to come from an animated cartoon.

Three Little Pigs was made, and had its première at Radio City Music Hall in May, 1933. Unlike the first Mickey Mouse, it caused no immediate sensation. The audience laughed, but not immoderately. But then, like a snowball, its popularity began to grow. When it was generally released it seemed to sweep through both America and England. The snowball grew bigger and bigger until it reached truly amazing proportions. People went to see those Three Little Pigs again and again. Everyone began to sing or hum or whistle Frank Churchill's little melody. Dance bands played it all over the world. It made £50,000 in three months and is still being shown and is still making money.

In ten years' time cinemas will still be showing it and audiences will still be hugging themselves in delight at the triumph of those three fat and pink little porkers over the villainous wolf. He will still be huffing and puffing and blowing their house down, and the portrait of a string of sausages, labelled "Father", will still be hanging on the wall of the wisest little pig who built his house of bricks. And the other little pig, who had put the mat with "Welcome" written on it outside his front-door, will still have time, after he has taken refuge in his house, to open the door and pointedly take the mat in when chased by the wolf—one of the most glorious gestures the cinema has produced and comparable to Chaplin's flick of his cigarette-end as he goes to prison. What pleasure that little picture must have given to people all over the world!

The next step was to produce Mickey Mouse himself in colour (until then it had only been used in the Silly Symphonies), and at the beginning of 1935 the full glory of those red velvet pants and the true magnificence of the pearl buttons burst upon a delighted world. Not that they were at first apparent in his début in colour, when he was discovered in a long military cloak and high hat, conducting the William Tell overture in *The Band Concert*, probably the funniest "short" comedy that has ever been made; but once Mickey and his friends had taken the plunge it soon became apparent that the black-and-white cartoons had served their purpose. In



"The Clock Cleaners" [*Mickey Mouse-RKO Radio*]

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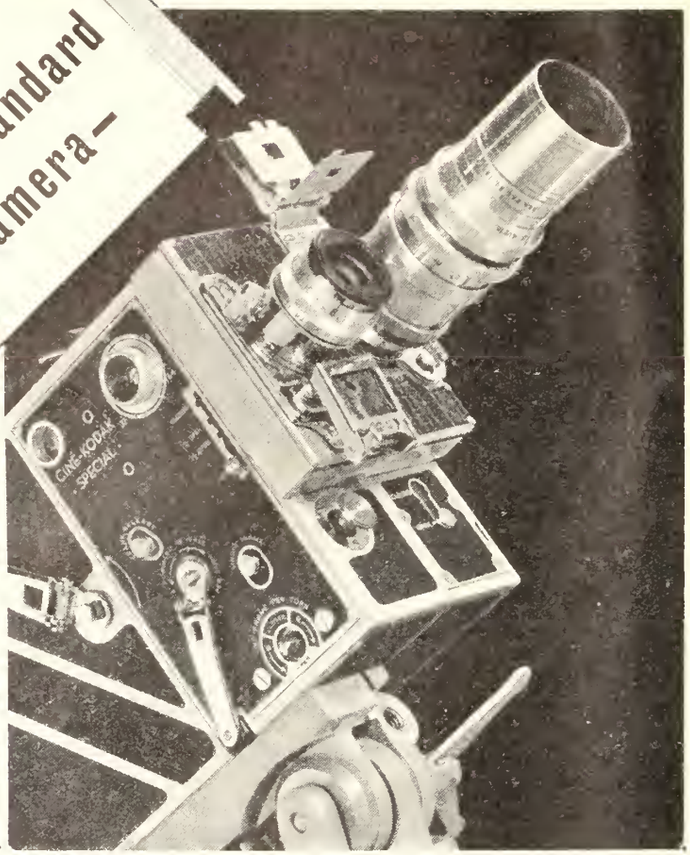

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1935 they were discontinued altogether.

But the greatest and most important landmark in Disney's career has yet to be dealt with. As early as 1934 Disney had started working on his first full-length cartoon in colour, *Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the most ambitious project he had ever attempted. No time or trouble was spared to make it a success, the fact that it was not destined for completion until 1937 being proof of this. The animation of little Snow-White was considerably in advance of any of Disney's other human figures who had appeared in his Silly Symphonies from time to time (and who had not been very convincing), and the cost of production was far in advance of anything that the studio had ever done before. An ordinary coloured Silly Symphony or Mickey Mouse costs about £10,000 to make and lasts about seven minutes on the screen. The cost of *Snow-White* has been put at anything between ten and twenty times that figure, and its effect on the film industry may well be revolutionary.

In 1935 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Hollywood selected Disney's *The Tortoise and the Hare* as the best cartoon of 1934, and in the following year chose *Three Orphan Kittens* as the best cartoon of 1935; *The Country Cousin* completed the treble in 1936. Since the Academy's selections have seldom met with universal approval, their awards in Disney's case need only be mentioned for the honour they confer (it was absurd to suppose that any other cartoonist could ever have been considered as a competitor) and their choice need not be discussed here.

The Tortoise and the Hare was undoubtedly one of his happiest inspirations, but it is a little difficult to understand why the other two were considered so outstanding.

One further point should be mentioned before leaving the subject of Disney's career and turning to a consideration of his work.

As he showed by his refusal to sell out his organisation after the success of *Steamboat Willie* in 1928, Disney has always been determined that his studio should retain its individuality, and that it should not be influenced by exterior Hollywood influences. What he and his staff wish to do, they do; if a picture is made which does not altogether satisfy them it is scrapped, even if it seems a good box-office proposition, and, as in the case of *Snow-White*, they are prepared to experiment even if there seems a likelihood of their losing money. Disney has not much use for the rest of Hollywood (the significance of *Mickey's Polo Team* should not be ignored), and he does not wish his work to become contaminated by Hollywood's factory methods.

At the present time his rivals, if such they may be called, are few and have yet to show that joyous appreciation of fun and fantasy which has made Disney supreme. From the start they were handicapped in the matter of colour by Disney's exclusive rights in the use of the Technicolor process, and have had to wait until his patent ran out before using it themselves. Moreover, they have shown themselves unable to create characters which have the personality and popular appeal of Disney's little people, and their draughtsmanship has always been greatly inferior. Of these rival cartoons the best are probably those produced by Max Fleischer for Paramount, the "Color Classics" after the style of the Silly Symphonies, and the series in which the notorious Pop-Eye The Sailor, that voracious eater of spinach, is the principal character. (The writer has often wondered whether spinach vendors have some mysterious influence in Hollywood, so persistent is the free advertisement given to this particular vegetable by the Californian studios.)

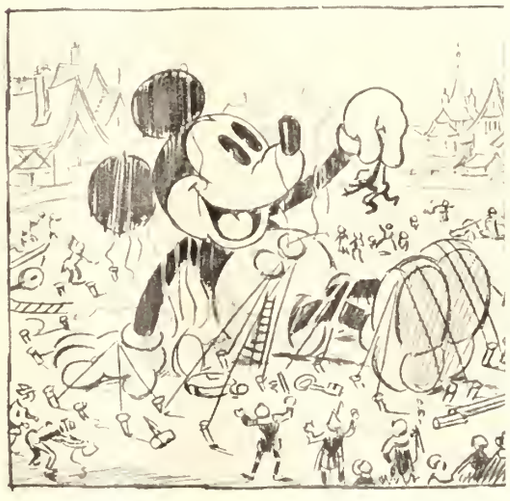
Pop-Eye, whose remarkable bass voice actually emanates from the throat of Billy Costello, the music-hall artist, is a notable figure whose adventures are always entertaining, and he has undoubtedly a forceful personality with a touch of the W. C. Fields pattern about him, for, like Fields, he is given to muttering inaudibly to himself. The Fleischer colour cartoons have also been notable on occasions, and although their colouring has never been in any way comparable to Disney's, they yet possess a pronounced stereoscopic effect which is not seen in Disney's work. This stereoscopic effect was most noticeable in the forest sequence in *The Elephant Never Forgets* and more especially in *Dancing on the Moon*, quite a remarkable and imaginative little work in its way and most effective in its shots of the receding earth. Nearly all Fleischer's coloured cartoons have a popular theme song as a background of sound, and the *Love in Bloom* music and the picturesque settings of *Time for Love* would have made this quite a noteworthy effort had the colouring not seemed so inferior when compared to that of a Silly Symphony.

Besides these, many of the big film companies seem to release cartoons of one kind or another, none of them outstanding. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, for example, have a series, *Happy Harmonies*, depicting the adventures of "Stinkie", the skunk, produced by Harman-Ising; Universal have the *Oswald the Rabbit* series already referred to; 20th Century-Fox distribute *Terry Toons*, featuring "Kiko the Kangaroo," and produced by Paul Terry; and besides Pop-Eye, Paramount also release a *Betty Boop* series in black-and-white.

In this country Reunion Films distribute the Anson Dyer cartoons based on Stanley Holloway's "Old Sam."

From them Disney has little to fear. His name is so well-known that to the majority of the film-going public the others simply do not count, with the unfortunate result for Disney that many film audiences are apt to assume that all cartoons are Disney cartoons (certainly all coloured ones) and he is often blamed for work that is not his. There seems no likelihood whatsoever of his competitors ever rivalling his skill and artistry, and the only danger seems to lie in the fact that Disney may one day be forced down to their level. But at the moment he is supreme, and remains in a class by himself.

Such, in brief, is Disney's story. Mickey no longer comes to life in a garage, for now his adventures are created in studios as lavishly equipped and as luxuriously fitted as any in Hollywood. Disney's name is a household word throughout the world and the financial resources behind him must be very great. And yet his story may have only just begun. He will always make money—there seems little reason to doubt that—but artistically his future is still hanging in the balance.



Top: An original sketch used to illustrate a Mickey Mouse version of Gulliver's Travels. Centre: Walt Disney and some co-workers in conference. Right: A Disney animator at work.

MAGINOT LINE

(*From the Film 'Double Crime sur la Ligne Maginot'*)

HELLO America: This is the Maginot Line calling. We're "somewhere in France", a little more than 100 feet underground, in the Metz sector of the Line. We can't give you the exact location. A few hours ago, we drove up here—through the peaceful rolling countryside of Lorraine—passed through a delightful bit of woods and walked right into the side of a hill. We passed through big iron doors. Over the doors was a plaque with crossed flags of the Republic of France, underneath was the legend: "*On ne passe pas*" meaning literally: "One does not pass".

We walked along a tunnel for about 75 feet, entered a very comfortable elevator and went down about 100 feet into the ground. We boarded a little electric train (much like the ones used in mines), were carried along for several hundred yards at about 15 miles an hour and here we are—talking to you from the centre of one of the most closely-guarded military secrets in Europe: the Maginot Line. On one side of this line stands France, a nation of just over 40 million inhabitants; on the other side 75 million citizens of the Greater Germany.

This line of fortifications, built by France at a cost of unknown billions of francs, stretches from Belgium to Switzerland. Let me tell you now a little about my immediate surroundings:

This is really a subterranean building. It's comfortable, air-conditioned and has central heating; it's bomb-, shell- and gas-proof. I'm talking from just outside the telephone exchange. It's as big as the switchboard in a modern hotel. Nearby is the hospital and operating-room. Down a short corridor is the kitchen, equipped with the latest electrical labour-saving devices. Across the way are the officers' quarters: they've got nice tiled shower-baths. Just at the corner is a room with blackboards on the wall; that's the control-room from which guns are directed. Remember: all of this is 100 feet underground. Officers and troops spend one week down here and then a week in barracks up on top. The troops, with a humour that is, perhaps, particularly French, call themselves "the moles".

Everything down here is done mechanically: the little electric train carries ammunition and supplies along the corridors until they reach an elevator that takes them up to a point near the surface. You see, the guns, in these forts, are operated as they are in a battleship, the gunner can't see his target, he receives his directions from the control room, his gun is fed by an automatic conveyor and he lays the gun as directed and fires when ordered to do so. These forts are constantly manned and the men eat and sleep down here. I think there is a relief coming up now. Let's listen to them as they pass the door (. . . . *sound of marching feet and troops singing*).

I've been referring to this particular place as a fort, but it certainly doesn't *look* like a fort. I can only ask you to imagine about a twelve-storey building sunk in the ground so that only the roof protrudes—just a few feet. In this case, the roof is steel and reinforced concrete and looks like a series of little cupolas, cleverly camouflaged. It is said that models of these upper defences were subjected to a pounding by 20-inch howitzers at close range—they stood the test, but the strength and thickness were tripled before they were installed.

These cupolas, of course, represent the striking-power of the forts. Everything below is constructed in such a way that both ammunition and men shall always be available to those guns. The communication system underground is duplicated throughout: double systems of telephone lines and lights have been installed, and everything seems to work by electricity. The little electric train has a horn that sounds to me almost exactly like a Paris taxi-cab. I think I hear it coming now—(*sound of train, horn and ringing bell*). Well, there goes the train. That one had eight flat cars, each about six or seven feet long. Incidentally, this underground railway system is a complete unit in itself, it has its signals, sidings, switches and station-master. The train can be carried up to the surface by elevators. They have both "express" and local elevators here.

IF you were to take that train to the exit, you would see some of the most beautiful countryside in this part of France. Green fields, carefully kept woods, apple trees in bloom, a peaceful river winding through the valley. If you looked carefully, you'd see certain mounds that look like overgrown toadstools. On closer inspection, they would turn out to be the cupolas or turrets surmounting these underground forts. These are really the most unobtrusive forts I've ever seen. They house big guns and little guns. Some of them can spring upright to fire and then drop back under their covering.

Now these forts are not in a straight line by any means; they are staggered, or in échelon formation. Most of them can swing round to fire in any direction: trees have been cut down and hills levelled in order to give a clear field of fire. (All this was, of course, done years ago, and the countryside has now resumed its normal appearance.) Every foot of terrain, within the range of the guns has been mapped and charted in those control rooms down in the ground. The aim has been to plan cross-fire for every gun.

If you looked out ahead of this main line, you'd see other and smaller toadstool-looking affairs. Those would be steel and concrete machine-gun emplacements. There are literally hundreds of acres of these toadstools in this sector. You'd have to look care-

Between France and Germany stretches the great fortified tunnel known as the "Maginot Line." Extending from Belgium to Switzerland this great defensive line has been the subject of much interest and speculation.

Here is an on-the-spot description by Edward Murrow and others broadcast from the "Maginot Line" itself. The broadcast was arranged and relayed to America by the Columbia Broadcasting Company.

fully to see them because they're not very obvious. And then, if you looked out beyond that line you'd see something that looked like a dark brown stain winding its way down through the valley and over the crest of the hills to the west. At first glance it would look almost dead sage-brush. If you walked out there you'd find that it's barbed wire entanglements—firmly anchored in the ground—and just beyond the barbed wire you'd see a strange sight: a little forest of rails—I mean railway rails—each one sticking up about five feet above the ground. They're planted there like posts, and they're calculated to cause a great deal of difficulty for tanks. This hedge of railway rails parallels the barbed wires as far as you can see.

Out in front of the rails all appears to be peaceful and quiet, but it's reasonable to suppose that there are mines out there. This whole country is interlaced with high-speed, hard-surfaced military roads. Walking through the woods you may at any time come unexpectedly upon a field of ten acres of barbed wire. If you turned and looked behind you, you'd see a few grey buildings in the dim distance: those would be barracks. There are probably other underground barracks that you can't see. There would be peaceful-looking farm-houses in the valley—probably black and white cows in the fields.

Driving up here yesterday a man pointed, out to me a delightful little château set in a clump of woods. He remarked "My grandfather was killed there in 1870". That, you will remember, was in the Franco-Prussian war. No one knows how many Germans and how many Frenchmen have given up their lives in this peaceful-looking valley in the course of the last two hundred years. It has been the floodgate of war. This area has been fortified since Roman times—they found the remains of Roman forts while excavating for these modern monsters.

If you could look across these hills to the German frontier as I did just before coming down here you'd probably think of those thousands of miles of unguarded frontier between the United States and its neighbours and you'd probably wonder how many people in Germany and how many people in France would be happier if *this* frontier could be as peaceful as ours.

Above ground one sees very few troops about. Down here, all stations are manned and it's the same all along the line. The troops, or "moles" as they call themselves, seem well fed and happy. They play cards and listen to the radio during their leisure time, sleep in comfortable double-decker beds very much like those used in the American army barracks. (Every young man to-day, in France, must serve two years with the colours.) Those here seem to be cheerful enough about it. There is a spirit of comradeship between officers and men that is traditionally associated with the French Army, and discipline doesn't seem to suffer as a result of it. In a time of emergency, the lives of these men down here would depend on the smooth functioning of very complicated machinery. There must be a constant flow of power for the lights, the ventilators, the guns, the kitchen, and all other essential services. That power is supplied by a battery of huge Diesel engines. I couldn't find my way down to the engine-room: there are too many galleries and turnings on the way, but we have run a telephone line down there, so let's listen to them. (*Sound of the engines for ten seconds.*)

VAN ACKERS: Engine-room calling. There are eight big Diesel engines down here and they're running very quietly, although it may not sound so to you. Everything in the engine-room is spotlessly clean. These engines are coupled on alternators which produce the electric current for the fort. Along the wall are cylinders of compressed air for use in starting the engines. The door to the engine-room, like all the other doors, has rubber round the edges to make it gas-proof. I don't know how they get the fuel down here, but it must be stored underground in great quantities, since the fort is a self-contained unit capable of functioning for several weeks, even though it should be completely cut off from the outside world. This room is certainly the heart of the fort, but the whole mechanism is, of course, controlled through the telephone exchange.

E. MURROW: We're back at the master-switchboard still a little more than 100 feet underground in the Maginot Line. We've tried to tell you what we've seen in this most modern example of the oldest type of defence. It's the sort of thing that's difficult to put into words. There's something unreal about it. These long miles of white corridors. The unknown thousands of men spending their days and nights underground, being quite natural and matter-of-fact about it. It's spring up above, the sun is just going down, people only a few miles from here are sitting down to their evening meal, probably a band is playing in one of those delightful squares in Metz, soldiers on leave, dressed in sky-blue uniforms, are strolling through the parks with good-looking French girls.

In a few minutes, we're going up above, but the men down here will continue to man their stations—waiting. We had hoped to bring you the voice of one of the officers, commanding this section of the Maginot Line. They've shown us great courtesy and permitted us to try to tell you of things seen by very few people outside the French fortress army. However, they've made it quite clear that they consider it the job of the French army to plan and wait, and not to talk.

We have been talking to you from the Maginot Line. This has been the first broadcast ever undertaken from this world-famous system of fortifications. We've tried to report what we have seen, and to give you some impression of the men and machines in the Line. This is Edward Murrow speaking from the Maginot Line, and returning you now to America.

THE MAY-JUNE NUMBER

Apologies to our readers for the delay in the May number of "World Film News", and for the unexplained dating of that number May-June.

This was due to a technical breakdown. Subscribers will be credited with an extra issue.

OLD MAN RIVER

Two years ago in America Pare Lorentz made the first American documentary film, *The Plow that Broke the Plains.* He had drawn certain inspiration from British documentary work, but the product was very American. It inherited many of the defects of documentary—the sound track was overobtrusive, the picture was occasionally hysterically impressionistic.

Now Pare Lorentz has produced his second film, *The River.* Made for the Farm Security Administration of the Roosevelt Government, it is mature and immeasurably superior to the first effort.

It describes the anarchic exploitation of the natural resources on the banks of the Mississippi and its tributaries. It shows unplanned individual exploitation, robbing a third of the Continent of its natural wealth and bringing poverty and desolation to all the country. It concludes by showing what the Roosevelt Administration is doing to bring back prosperity to the Mississippi region.

The film is four reels in length and brings this great subject to the screen with a logical building of sequences that is a neat piece of bricklaying. In consideration of its material and its technical polish, it is better than most documentaries produced in this country. The sound track is majestically conceived and sweeps the film along. The director's organisation of all the elements in the story, the brilliance of the photography make the whole film

★ ★ ★

Sensational American Documentary 'The River' reviewed

★ ★

a well-ordered natural sequence of events that never suffers from the defeet of developing side issues.

It has been said that a great deal of money was spent on the film and it is that whieh produeed its polish, but one only eriticises a result, and there have been eomparable British documentary films that have not approached the smoothness of *The River*.

Perhaps its most important quality, when all discussion of technical and informational virtues is finished, is its box office. One exhibitor who saw the film, and who has often expressed the opinion that British documentary is too difficult for ordinary cinemas, said that he would willingly show *The River*.

That, in the long run, is the test that all documentary films must pass. Will the ordinary cinema exhibitor book it? *The River* is eminently bookable.

Its defects eome from two things; firstly from its impressionistie style, and seeondly from the faet that it is reporting a State enterprise. Although its impressionism is brilliantly carried out, the film's pyroteehnies tend to obseure the information that it is presenting. Beeause it is reporting a State enterprise that ignores the individual, the film is eold. It overlooks the individual men who man the dykes, the men who load the eotton and the men who crop the cotton fields.

In the film men are only cogs in the wheel of a pieee of State machinery. Even in showing the operations of individual enterprise only the mass effect is considered. Were there more personal feeling for human beings in the film, the problem and its solution might have communieated itself more deeply to the audienee. It has the fault of all impressionistic technique—the shallow thinking, the laek of intimacy and the delight in film craft.

However, on the whole, it is a film to stir the imagination. It brings a new facet of the American scene to British audiences and, in so doing, it helps to play a part in that much to be desired end—a common understanding between the two great democraeies of America and Britain. It seems that it is only through the medium of such films from America and through British documentary films that both nations obtain a realisation of their individual problems and their common interests.

David Thompson.

Pare Lorentz's documentary 'The River' (*Farm Security Administration*).

THE Administration seems to be very sueeessful with the movies it makes. *The River* is its latest eontribution to the art of the cinema, a picture which perhaps exceeds in beauty and force that earlier effort, beautiful and forceful too, which was known to us as *The Plow That Broke the Plains*. For both films the government has employed practically the same talent, and has shown itself in so doing as discreet and diseriminating as some of the electorate feel it is in everything it handles. Pare Lorentz directed both, and wrote the text for them; Virgil Thomson eomposed the score in each ease, and in both Thomas Chalmers, once of the Metropolitan, reeited the Lorentz narrative.

You can see that there is nothing amateurish or easual about the Administration's interest in the movies. The result testifies to all this care and ability. One's only eomplaint can be that the picture is too brief, a phenomenal objeetion in this bustling world, and that the half-hour it runs seems to pass in a jiffy. So swift is the pace and so eomprehensive the material that one may feel the effect of the film to be almost brusque.

The river of *The River* is the Mississippi, with its tributaries, its creeks and brooks, which spread out across two-thirds of the continent. The Lorentz objeetive, and the Administration's, has been to instruct us in the story of this river and its valley, the story of the soil impoverished first by cotton-growers and then by the Civil War, of the floods and famine that have ensued, and of the efforts for recovery now being made. It's a tremendous summary, which takes us from the spruee and pine of the Alleghenies to the mud of the delta; it reports upon the share-croppers in the Deep South, the ruins of the houses of Natchez, the floods of Louisville and Cincinnati, and the new dams in Tennessee.

To have covered so mueh mileage, to have demonstrated how a century's activities have worked upon the land, to have made so much material lucid in a half-hour, has required a laboratory exactitude which has been entirely successful. The argument is economic, but it happens to be of pictorial magnificence, which these cameramen have appreciated to the full, just as Mr. Lorentz doubtless realised that a simple listing of the names of rivers, ranges, and towns gave his text a swing and gusto almost poetic.

John Mosher, The New Yorker

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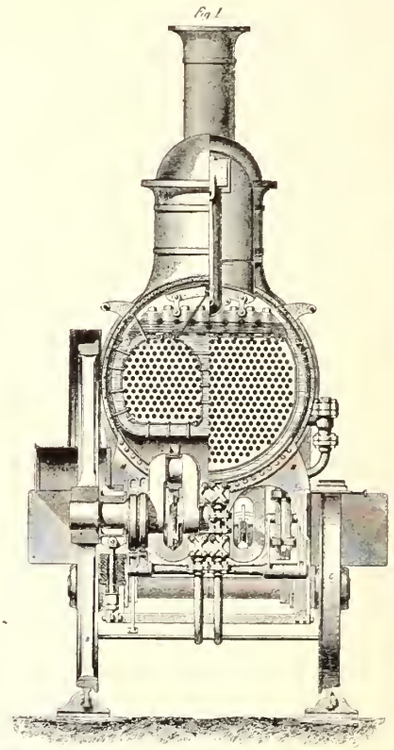

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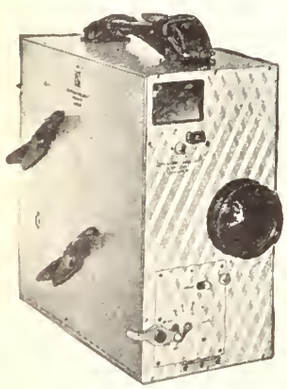

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'The RIVER' DAMNED

Some critics have questioned the enthusiastic praise given Pare Lorentz's Film 'The River', in this country and America. W.F.N. prints this comment by Muriel Rukeyser without in any way endorsing her criticisms of the film.

SECOND in the projected series of U.S. Documentary Films, *The River* has followed *The Plow That Broke The Plains* under the backing of the U.S. Farm Security Administration. Infinitely more popular from the beginning than *The Plow*, *The River* is creating a stir that is bound to increase the attention given to documentaries in America, and open a field well-prepared by English imports and the few efforts already made in America. But *The River*, which is being met with inordinate praise, both from audiences and reviewers, has its dangers. They lie in a certain slackening of standard and tightness. The film itself is finished; the dangers are such that they may be passed on to future films. Looseness of conception, inadequacy of "plotting," lack of climax are all found in a work as ambitious in theme and range as any documentary has been, and with many of the virtues of breadth and common appeal.

The River was shot in 1936; just as the original script was finished, the Mississippi burst, and additions, shot in the flood areas, are in the film as it stands now. A patch inserted to make a film topical would show to the damage of most scripts, but it is among the vices and virtues of *The River* that there are no signs of stitches. The patch becomes one of a series, with very little garment visible. The film is loosely centred around the quality and effect of the Mississippi on its huge valley (which covers two-thirds of the United States), and the history of the valley in terms of its rivers which feed the Mississippi. There are sequences of beautiful shots, resolved without any satisfaction, stacking isolated excellences. For example, the small trickle, which signifies the headwaters, enlarged into flood during the film, including fine moments of icicles dripping, clear shallow streams over pebbles, and the high motion of flood crest—and all this excellence never resolves into a river flow in one direction across a screen until it reaches its delta. The old river traffic, predicted so superbly by the shots of paddle-boats, never are carried out of Mark Twain's times; the old lumber industry falls away, but the new machine industries are never explained.

Its photography is the best thing about *The River*. Stacy Woodard, Floyd Crosby, and Willard Van Dyke have done some first-rate work; work so good that a spectator questions the sense of buying stock shots from such Hollywood films as *Come and Get It*, instead of spending the amount necessary to use dialogue for the few family scenes, instead of using commentary. The narration itself is weak, fake poetic, and often ridiculous. It depends often on names, place-names, battle-names, names of years and trees,

> Black spruce and Norway pine;
> Douglas fir and red cedar;
> Scarlet oak and shagbark hickory . . .

or, in the beginning, and in countless repetitions,

> . . . Down the Judith, the Grand, the Osage, and the Platte;
> The Rock, the Salt, the Black and Minnesota;
> Down the Monongahela, the Allegheny, Kanawha and Muskingum;
> The Miami, the Wabash, the Licking and the Green;
> The White, the Wolf, the Cache and the Black;
> Down the Kaw and Kaskaskia, the Red and Yazoo
> Down the Cumberland, Kentucky and the Tennessee . . .

names that are in themselves evocative and rich, but which in reiteration become the chanted jargon of a lesson, a childish and geographical glossolalia. The voice of the narrator (Thomas Chalmers) goes on and on in a well-trained baritone, smoothing over the lurches. But the film itself slips, and the slip is apparent from anywhere in the house. The voice is not talking about what is on the screen; climaxes slip; the music (Virgil Thomson) slips, and from variations on 'Hot Time In The Old Town To-night,' it slides to strident, outdated 1,2,1,2,3, blast-furnace music when we should be hearing the machines themselves; and, when the river as enemy has built to the top of its menace, we hear, ingratiatingly, in a new key, 'Old Man River.'

The River's story is that of a wide and magnificent basin wasted through war and boomtime, expansion, greed, and flood. The Mississippi has drawn off the land of the South, as far back as the mountains, through erosion, mismanagement and the great floods, washed the land off into the Gulf of Mexico. The story to be told is the land in terms of its people and industry and common history, and there is a future beyond that of re-planting. But in *The River*, the story is garbled, the people are all but omitted, and the land is left, with its sole promise in water-power (the shots of power-plants and dams are, again, first-rate) and between the lines an implicit condemnation for the entire farming South.

There is real excitement of content and possibility in *The River*. Its threat to documentaries is in its inherent carelessness, its sloppy technique and development. What it is doing is to lower its own standard through truncated sequences, missed connections, and a narration full of childish parallelisms. Its virtue is in the great stimulus of its material, its honest excitement, and the promise of future documentaries for which it is helping to prepare an audience.

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YOU CAN'T take it WITH YOU

Several people have tried. Alistair Cooke explains why they failed.

A scene from the American play 'Idiot's Delight' now running in London. [George Elliot and Anthony Vivian].

Now what is the situation about the production of American plays in London and the production of British plays in New York? I think first that on the score of revivals of classical plays we are about equal. New York sees Ibsen and Shakespeare and Tchekov as often as London. It is in the performance of dramatists of our own day that a list to starboard sets in. The average American playgoer in this city knows English drama of to-day by the plays of these people: Shaw, Lonsdale, O'Casey, Coward, Somerset Maugham, Dodie Smith, Keith Winter, W. H. Auden, Paul Vincent Carroll, J. B. Priestley, Ian Hay. He sees the London theatre and knows the plays of the people who write for it, less well, of course, than you do, but he sees a remarkable number of British plays and players and they are representative. . . . London is nothing like as familiar as it might be with the plays of S. N. Behrman, Paul Green, Irwin Shaw, John Steinbeck, Marc Connolly, M. Erskine, John Howard Lawson, Sidney Howard. So much for the plays, though I don't think that London should feel any duty to reflect in miniature the corresponding Broadway season. But what does matter is that any nation's plays should be accurately and naturally acted when they are staged abroad. Mr. George Jean Nathan, the American critic, once said that if it was American plays you were looking for in London you could expect to find at least one play in which "some hero of American history, like Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, or John Brown, will in the British handling be quite indistinguishable from Sir Thomas Beecham or Mr. Cyril Maude".

* * * *

I wish I could cap Mr. Nathan's remark by saying that in English plays in New York you will find a country vicar or an earl played in the manner of a friendly cowboy or a real estate agent, but I am afraid it is not true. An Englishman has reason to be proud of the Broadway productions of English plays.

Most of the casts of imported plays are imported too and directed by Englishmen; only once this year, in an adaptation of *Barchester Towers*, could it be truthfully said that Miss Ina Claire had treated Anthony Trollope to a night at the Stork Club, or some other fashionable New York night club, whereas only once in my memory was an American play in London performed in the way it would be put on in New York. That was the production of *Street Scene* in—was it 1930? But supposing that the drama of Great Britain and the drama of the United States were equally well presented on each side of the Atlantic, there would be other snags which producers are hitting all the time and which they say nothing can be done about. I mean snags that anybody would hit who started to choose the other country's entertainment. . . .

I know no good reason why English people should be thought stupid because they don't like the Marx Brothers or the works of George Kaufman. The name of G. Kaufman is especially apt, because there is no possible doubt this side of the Atlantic

about his standing as a comic writer. He has a type of humour which seems to be indigenous to this country, but it is liked and understood almost as well by visiting French and Germans.

When *You Can't Take It With You* was produced in London the theatre was warmed by hardly a single smile. What sense or satire is there, the London critics asked, and justly, in a piece which shows a little business-man coming home by accident with a grand duchess? Well, that would be highly fantastic in London. It is not, however, so fantastic in a city like New York where 500 impoverished Russian dukes and countesses live, where, indeed they have banded themselves together into an association called "Russian Nobility, Inc.", which puts on once a year a great ball, costumed in the court dress of Nicolas II. *You Can't Take It With You* is one kind of play that nobody should have dreamed of exporting. If some theatre manager—if *that* unhappy theatre manager, should be listening he may fairly ask just what kind of play was it? Well, I would say it's a play built around local whimsicality. I know scores of people who have aunts and uncles exactly like that family and when Americans see it they warm to recognisable types and humours. But although you can safely translate mathematics, ideas and dollars into pounds, though you can even sometimes translate a national humour, one thing will not travel—it is your own local or family kind of whimsy. Private humour should be enjoyed in private, and so far as *You Can't Take It With You* is concerned, privacy means New York City.

Let's look at another play which is packing houses here but ran only a short time in London. I mean the farce *Room Service*. Again the London critics complained that here was a fantasia which could hardly be tied up with ordinary living. To its English audience it seemed like a puzzle ingeniously put together but not adding up to anything real or very funny. Yet *Room Service* depended for its fun on your being familiar with the way an American Hotel is operated. The very title is a native coining. I have many times had to rescue Englishmen who had little time to catch the boat and picked up the telephone in their bedroom, and expected that by talking to the same person they would get their bill, their luggage collected, their meals paid for and possibly their laundry returned and did not know that these services were decentralised. In New York *Room Service* is almost the funniest play I expect to see.

I say "almost" because there will be another one along next season. There always is. Its humour lay in the pathetic demands put on a hotel system which claims to attend to most human demands. After all, in a hotel where you can have drinks, or ice water, or a sandwich sent up to your room at any time of night and day, it is funny to take it for granted that you can call the manager and ask him to take care of a suicide for twenty minutes. Here were two men stuck in a hotel room they couldn't afford. They couldn't sneak out, because there would be the manager waiting with the bill. They have exhausted the hotel's patience and credit. Even the room service, the food has been cut off. They sit there wondering how to keep alive and as the night creeps along, one of them, a little white, says "I see spots before my eyes; spots as big as Hamburgers". Over by the bed, his friend says bitterly, "If you see one with onions, save it for me". These touched off the audience to laughter, but also to pity because the two men were two recognisable Americans who might at that moment be stuck in a hotel downtown Broadway. I understand the London production slowed down the lines and exaggerated the business so that the actors remained actors instead of turning into people. So what you were likely to see was a play of fantastic ideas; what we saw was a play of pathetic and uproarious facts.

Similarly, the imagination somehow stumbles at the idea of Miss Gladys Cooper playing Mrs. Sam Dodsworth, because Sinclair Lewis did not dream of anybody remotely like Gladys Cooper, any more, I suppose, than Shakespeare was thinking of Mae West when he wrote Lady Macbeth.

Several other charges have been made by one side against the other, but they are in effect boomerangs. They sting the people who throw them. Let me illustrate. You have heard about 100 per cent Americans—an unpopular race in England—but it may interest you to know that in some of the imported English plays the American critics recognise 100 per cent Englishmen. Mr. Robert Benchley, reviewing an English play he liked, said it was fine once you got used to the intense glandular activity of the young people in the first act, once they had stopped bouncing. Another charge is that of sentimentality, of a recognisable national brand. We are agreed, I hope, that the Americans have a very special and pretty nauscous way of being sentimental, over friendship, over giving a helping hand, over many a thing you have seen in the movies and blushed at; but the Americans recognise also a special brand of English sentimentality. They never can take seriously our heart-searching plays about the troubles of people like *Young Woodley*. They find something typical of us in our three-act tragedies about what we would call "sensitive young men". Here is a sentence of an American critic after a visit to such a play in London "It seems you will always find in London several imitations of Tchekov in which the repressed young wife of the master of the house will, at the end of the second act, throw herself passionately into the arms of any male character who can play the piano, provided, provided only, he was gassed in the last war."

The situation to-day, as I see it, is this. It is a true statement that Americans like ice-cream with chocolate sauce; it is a true statement that the English like roast beef with horseradish sauce; what our theatrical producers have done and continue to do is this. They say "Come and sit down at our table; we pick the best foods of all nations. On the menu to-day is a fine dollop of ice-cream which, as you're English, sir, we shall serve to you with horseradish sauce." The American gets the roast beef and finds he really rather likes it, but in the cause of international goodwill and good manners, he takes it with chocolate sauce.

This is an extract from a radio talk relayed from America on May 25th, and is reproduced by kind permission of the B.B.C.

A scene from J. B. Priestley's 'I Have Been Here Before'

CAMERA on NATURE

Out of Gilbert White's History of Selborne came the now famous G.B.I. series, Secrets of Life. How they grew up, and how they are made, is the subject of this article.

TWENTY-TWO years ago a film executive happened on a copy of White's *History of Selborne*. That executive was H. Bruce Woolfe, and his turning over the pages was the origin of the series of films, *Secrets of Nature*, renamed four years ago *Secrets of Life*.

That these films should be based on Gilbert White's book is significant, because the spirit of "Selborne" remains very much the spirit of these short films. White knew a good deal, but he wanted to know more. His method was to watch, and note, and record, and finally to risk a deduction or raise a pertinent query. He was in no way didactic and, by nature, was averse to laying down the law. He wished to share with others the interest of the every-day world of nature that surrounded him, an interest which made his somewhat humdrum existence essentially exciting and colourful. In the same way the *Secrets*, though scientific in approach, are in themselves not at all instructional. They are not framed to teach, but only to give a record. To the recorders their work is fascinating and they lay it before the public with the hope that those who see it may look at the world about them with added interest, may make notes and, perhaps, read and study further.

A printed book like "Selborne" can get to nature-lovers without difficulty, but twenty years ago there was only one way for a film to reach the public and that was through the cinema theatres. Even to-day, when there has been so great a development of non-

Top left: 'Kings In Exile.' *Above: 'Tawny Owl'*

theatrical film exhibition, it is still through the cinema theatres that one reaches the "common man" for whom the *Secrets* are made. In the last two and a half months over half a million people have seen the film *Kings in Exile* and, before its theatrical run is over, at least two million film-goers in this country alone will have been amused, interested and surprised by that simple zoo study. It was in order to reach such audiences that, twenty years ago, when the first *Secrets of Nature* film was produced, it was produced for theatrical exhibition and its successors have been made, with that same market in view, ever since.

Allowing for the fluctuations that one must expect in the entertainment world, this series of films has enjoyed an unbroken popularity. Sometimes, as now, the *Secrets* are extravagantly in favour, sometimes they attract less interest, but always there is some sort of demand for them. There are possibly two reasons for this. One is that the majority of British people are innately interested in nature, as the desire for window boxes, allotments, and little plots of garden proves. The second is that the makers of the films do their best to remember that they are making entertainment films to be shown in the middle of an entertainment programme, and make an effort, therefore, to produce something that can follow a Frank Lloyd production or a Will Hay comedy without giving the onlookers too great a shock by change of atmosphere. Like a turn in a variety programme the short film must be different from what goes before and after, but remain in the same key.

Indeed, if one studies this series of shorts from its inception, one gets very interesting evidence of the change in film entertainment during the last twenty years. The early *Secrets* were often long one-reelers, eleven or twelve hundred feet, and the pictures, straight scenes taken from one set-up, were interspersed with long continuity titles. Lucky producers of those early days, who, when their subject failed to oblige with the necessary action, could put in a title! Patient audiences that allowed their entertainment to move so slowly!

By 1926 the titles were much shorter and the films themselves never exceeded the limit of a thousand feet. At this date too, there begins to be variety of angle. By 1929, in the manner of the best silent films, the titles had, as far as possible, disappeared. There were many more effects gained by cutting and action, and a large variety of camera angles were employed. 1930 introduced sound, and the first sound short to be produced in Great Britain was a *Secrets of Nature*, the life of a Sweet-Pea, edited against time to be included in the première of Douglas Fairbanks's *Taming of the Shrew*.

The *Secrets*, which were short and relatively inexpensive, were used for many of the early sound experiments to be made in this country. They were the first films to try, and then to discard, musical masterpieces as accompaniments. They were the first short films to have their music composed for them. They include most of the early experiments in commentary, long syllabled words for slow moving scenes, and short staccato syllables for quick action. *Plants of the Underworld*, in the second 1930 Series, included the first attempt to fit specially written blank verse into the commentary. Another picture in the same Series, *Daily Dozen at the Zoo*, was the original attempt to cut actuality pictures to an already recorded sound-track, after the example set by Walt Disney with his Mickey Mouse cartoons. When you remember that the moviolas of 1930 were very rough and ready and frequently jumped two or three frames, this pioneer effort was far more of a labour than modern young editors would imagine. The frames had to be hand-counted as there was no mechanical way of measuring them, and the film was 960 feet long!

On the whole the *Secrets* have not had many changes of commentator and those changes are themselves indicative of the trend of the entertainment film. At first, when sound films were an exciting novelty and everything was more or less amateur, a studio executive with a particularly pleasing voice

recorded commentaries in odd moments. As sound became established, there dawned the era of the B.B.C. announcer. Then, when American quick-fire commentaries and the spate of gangster pictures accustomed audiences to more crisp speech, a B.B.C. actor was substituted and now a specialised film commentator is employed. Some people, noticeably correspondents to the *Times*, object to this sequence of commentary change as a decline of dignity, which it undoubtedly is; but surely only the young, the uncertain, and the *Times* are always dignified. The quips of the *Secrets of Life* commentaries grow out of the pictures themselves and the audience listens (which it often does not trouble to do with a serious commentary), laughs, and remembers.

Few people appreciate how real is the team work on *Secrets of Life*. Camera-man, editor, musical director and commentator, all collaborate closely to give that impression of unity which is essential to a short picture. Each worker alters and modifies his work to make it dovetail into that of the others. The most intransigent are undoubtedly the actual cinematographers who can, if they wish, announce that nature has defeated them, but it is a point of honour with them not to be defeated by nature. Witness Percy Smith who, when a film on the "Dodder" had been undertaken, found at Kew and in the British Museum thirty-two ways of killing this plant pest, but no suggestions of how to make the seeds germinate. It took him two years to find out. Most of the *Secrets* except Zoo subjects, take two years to make, partly because of such problems as that set by the Dodder, partly because the need for a variety of camera angles makes one season's work inadequate for the editor's demands. Four years for a really difficult microscopic subject is not an uncommon period of production.

For, entertainment as they are, the *Secrets* very often justify their name and do in truth reveal details of natural movement. Botanists look at the stop-motion work and say, "We knew this happened, but we have never seen it happen"; slow-motion, cinémicrography and tank work frequently provide fresh material for the biologist. Each series of *Secrets of Life* is made up of six subjects, and these usually include one film of bird life, one of insect life, one fresh water or marine subject, one study of plant life, one definitely microscopic subject and one zoological study. This pattern cannot always be adhered to because sometimes a film fails to materialise, but, as about nine or ten films are put into production to ensure half a dozen being ready to time, the variation from the plan is not considerable. These six types of subject ensure variety and ensure also a good deal of powder in the jam—the films are entertainment, but there is a wealth of instruction in them for those who want it.

Sometimes the *Secrets of Life* series are confused with biological films such as *Hydra*, or nature-study films of the *Plover* type. But films for instruction are produced on entirely different lines, with slower editing, simple and serious commentary and no additional sound except, when possible, natural sound. Occasionally the editing of the mute of a *Secret* will serve also for a simple nature study, as in the case of *Hedgerows*, but usually some scenes need to be added or omitted. In most cases, as in *Embryology of the Trout* and *Catch of the Season*, both dealing with trout, only a very small amount of biological material is common to both films and the presentation of it is entirely different. The educational film is for those who wish to learn, the *Secrets of Life* is designed for those who wish to relax. But the *Secrets* reach those whom the educational film can, at present, never touch. They widen the outlook of very ordinary people who take a char-a-banc ride to Scarborough, who hike out of Glasgow, who paddle at Margate or keep a bowl of gold-fish in a London flat. It is significant that the most popular of the series have been those dealing with subjects that everyone knows, a Scarlet Runner or a Thistle. And, if some of the public who fill the sixpenny seats, can, from an entertainment "short", catch a little of the spirit of Gilbert White of Selborne, the makers of *Secrets of Life* feel that their two to four years' work is well justified.

A SLIGHT CASE OF MURDER

Reviewed by Basil Wright

To review *A Slight Case of Murder* in Runyonese—which the film most richly merits—would be too easy a way out of criticising one of the most interesting type-films ever to emerge from Hollywood. By no conceivable stretch of imagination could you imagine any other area of the world which could take a story of the most macabre nature and make it genuinely funny—using moreover a language, or rather argot, which, up till the coming of the talkie, would have been about as intelligible as Hindustani to the average British audience, and which, even now, must need sharp hearing and an alert brain in anyone not yet a confirmed reader of the amazing Damon (he has by the way found a real Pythias in the gentleman who adapted the story for the screen).

Here is the story. Prohibition having been repealed (as Julius Cæsar would put it), Marko, a wealthy purveyor of bootleg beer (a gentleman gangster in fact) decides to go legitimate. Unfortunately his beer is foul, and was only consumed *faute-de-mieux* in the old days, and he is hard pressed by the bank. He departs for his country house in Saratoga, pausing en route to pick up the toughest boy ever from his Alma Mater (an orphanage), and there finds (*a*) four corpses, (*b*) the proceeds of a hold-up of the Bookies' funds (half a million), (*c*) a State Trooper preparing to marry his only daughter, and (*d*)—if he but knew it—the murderer himself, slipping in and out of bedroom doors. He dumps the corpses on various doorsteps of local folk he dislikes, but his henchmen discover that there is 10,000 dollars reward for each corpse (dead or alive). They rush out to collect them again, and conceal them in a closet upstairs. To cut a long story short, the complications are finally resolved by the State Trooper, who, with eyes firmly shut and shaking with terror, re-shoots the corpses through the closed door, and with a wild final bang kills the murderer—quite by mistake—after which he most appropriately falls in a dead faint.

If you think this plot distasteful, I recommend you to go and see the film, in order to get some idea of what this sort of film-making means. It means that the entire film is genuinely funny; it means that the story, as complicated as one could possibly imagine, is so neatly constructed and so clearly presented that it has all the brilliance of cut glass; it means, too, the employment, presumably at any cost, of an ace director (Lloyd Bacon) and an all-star cast, including Edward G. Robinson (of whom more anon), Ruth Donnelly, that masterly matron with a heart (and hair) of gold, Allen Jenkins, exquisitely dumb, and Bobby Jordan, one of those incredible kids from *Dead End;* to all which we must most certainly add a host of small part players, who, glimpsed even for a short flash though many of them be, all represent a polished capability which should be (but isn't) the despair of our own studios.

It is no mean feat to operate about six sub-plots continuously without the slightest loss of ease or intelligibility, but so confident is Lloyd Bacon that he even throws in a number of elaborate gags for good measure, of which one is the most comic I have ever seen. It involves, of course, death. Marko, throwing a party, with a really bad singer as the entertainer, bethinks him in his warm-hearted way of a friend, who is in hospital at San Diego. He gets through to him on long distance, and transmits "I'm Dancing with Tears in my Eyes" to the invalid, who is surrounded by nurses and surmounted by an ice-pack. As the song ends, so the invalid passes away. Why this should be so funny only the silver screen can explain.

Much of the balance of *A Slight Case of Murder* depends on the personality of Marko, and here Edward G. Robinson blossoms into a new splendour. It is a far cry from the ranting melodramatics of *Two Seconds* to this gauche, blustering, likeable tough; just a great big little boy with a slug-and-racket background, a precarious present, and a pretty murky future. Essentially superficial the characterisation may be, but Robinson invests it with conviction and adorns it with all the trimmings of a considered acting technique. Observe carefully his speech to the orphans. The dialogue is at its weakest, but little Cæsar, by means of I couldn't count how many neat little tricks, makes it sincere, amusing and pathetic. It is typical that immediately afterwards he refuses the star pupils from whom he is to select one for a holiday at his estate, and asks for the worst boy in the school. ("Pierre," says the headmistress, "Take three of the other older boys with you, go down to the cellar, unlock Douglas and bring him to my study.") It is also typical that among all the hurly-burlies of corpse gathering he never forgets the needs of this minor thug, whom he regards as possessing something very near a halo.

There are no major, and few minor criticisms to make of this film. I found it grand entertainment, slightly satirical, very funny, and not at all immoral. The Runyon dialogue is glorious, though whether this is a case of art imitating nature, or vice versa, it is difficult to say.

Curiously enough, the story of *Break the News* also makes excursions into the macabre. The core of the plot is a fake murder, for publicity purposes, arranged by two chorus boys. Unfortunately the murderee, while awaiting the dramatic moment to save his friend from the death sentence, is kidnapped and condemned to death by some Ruritanian revolutionaries, with the result that we are treated to a pretty grim sequence of Maurice Chevalier jittering in the condemned cell; and the episode is sufficiently unfunny to take the film out of comedy into the hinterlands of melodrama.

I doubt if I would have recognised *Break the News* as a René Clair film had I not been so informed by the advance publicity and the credit titles. Much of it is efficient comedy; much of it, too, is slow and uninspired; while the two or three good sequences are but shadow-boxing from the maestro who made *Les Deux Timides* and *Le Million*. The fantasy of Jack Buchanan, changing hats rapidly according to which party is uppermost in a street revolution, is good, but not good enough. The nearest approach to the old Clair standards is reached in the scenes of a really bad musical comedy in progress, with Chevalier and Buchanan as appallingly inefficient extras and embarrassingly frightful hoofers. But in general the film straggles along, and seems, like Macduff, to have been "from its mother's womb untimely ripped". However, the spark still glows, and one may still expect Clair to return to form when he feels a little more at home in the peculiar atmosphere of London.

To hear Clark Gable, as a death-tempting pilot, refer to the sky—in front of his wife—as his mistress, and to talk of slapping its pretty little face, is a new and not particularly enjoyable experience. *Test Pilot* is full of boloney of this sort, with full screen close-ups of Gable and Myrna Loy registering away in the manner of the good old days of the silent film. Devoted though I am to Miss Loy, I felt I had never seen her so unhappily cast; as for Mr. Gable, he is—at any rate—as efficient at his job as ever, but—"some people like spinach and others do not" as Mr. Theo Fligelstone so sagely remarked a few years back. The best things about *Test Pilot* are firstly Spencer Tracy, who gives a magnificent performance as the pilot's inarticulate mechanic, and is at times so real as to tear the picture to tatters (but must he *always* die towards the end of Reel Six?); and secondly, the aerial stuff, which is really well done. The menacing truck-and-pan shot of the big bomber, gleaming and solitary on the flying field, which signals the climax of the film, says a great deal more in one shot than all the high-falutin' dialogue, the suffering faces, and the noise. There is, however, no dog in the film.

Walter Wanger's

BLOCKADE

Reviewed by Marion Fraser

It is a pity that *Blockade* is a war picture. It is a very great pity that it is a picture of a war that is happening so very near to us. The picture may be a success in America. America is very far away from Spain. But it will not be a success in Britain. Word will get around. It is an unpleasant picture to see. Children are shown crying, starving and hoping without reason. Women are shown despairing, dying. The fact of war is shown naked. That fact is food or lack of it, destruction, suffering, betrayal. And at the crux of it is the human heart and mind that is capable at the same time of sympathy and callousness; capable of sacrificing the lives and untold sufferings of others for the sake of one wretched life that happens to be one's own. The film will tell you that this precious life, this precious self is walking the pavements of London, and the pavements in all the towns of Britain. Its eyes are shut and because they are, children are starving, limbs are being torn asunder, families are being parted, human affections and human emotions are being petrified. This is the message of *Blockade:* "*Where is the conscience of the world?*"

Blockade is a film directed by William Dieterle and in it Madeleine Carroll and Henry Fonda play the principal parts. Despite all the trappings of studios: assistant directors, continuity girls, back projection, niggers, booms, blimps and all the rest: despite numerous crudities and clichés, a good deal of sincerity has crept into the film. And how it has happened is really a miracle. One has the sensation that a play is being acted and that the players are about to push the camera aside and take their bow for an indifferent but conscientious performance. At the end Henry Fonda faces the audience, schoolboyishly, crudely earnest and asks "Where is there peace?" The film is pointed to this question mark.

Boy and girl romance, parting, misunderstanding, reconciliation, reward—all are there, but there is no felicity and little happiness. There is no happy ending. The sweethearts know that there is no such thing and the film tries to say that there is no such thing for sweethearts anywhere—a truth that the screen has seldom revealed.

BLOCKADE is not the sort of picture we pay to see. It takes the flesh off the bones of our conventions; it strips off respectability and habit and tradition. It kills our dreams and if we are cowards it makes us afraid. It is very much too near the truth and too near home. It is not really important that the air warfare is taking place in Spain; it would not be really important that the bombs were falling in Kensington Gardens among the prams and nursemaids. The important thing is that the cause of these horrors is in our own minds that shift with every wind of propaganda, that make cowards or heroes of us at will, that shut out the main issues and concern themselves with the minor ones, that seek ease and comfort for the body at the expense of a thousand other bodies that are broken and gangrened.

No doubt you will refuse to see *Blockade* now that you have been told what it is all about. Indifference is the greatest panacea for what ails us. There is one hope—that we have used the drug so long it will refuse to work. However, an account of the film story may tempt you to see it. It follows all the rules of movie scenarios.

THE story begins in Spain with a stock situation. An expensive young woman in an expensive car has a road accident. A young peasant (with the help of picturesque, flute-playing sheep-herd) succours her. They fall in love. War breaks out. The peasant leads the neighbours in defending his land against the enemy, and is given a special commission to track down spies. The girl's father is a spy. The peasant shoots him and the two meet over his dead body. He arrests the girl and a convenient tête-à-tête is arranged by an air raid. The girl escapes to headquarters where she meets the villain (already known to her) and his superior officer, both of whom are working against the party to which they ostensibly belong. They enrol her as a spy and she is to arrange for the destruction of a food ship. This food ship is to save from starvation the entire population of a beleaguered town. She conveys the message to destroy the ship, but on seeing the frightful conditions in the town, repents and tries to cancel instructions. This is unsuccessful and a ship entering harbour is blown up. But the ship is a decoy, not the food-ship. The girl has cleared herself as far as the peasant is concerned but she has betrayed her chiefs. She and the peasant are about to be shot when at the psychological moment the villains are revealed, the sweethearts saved and, of course, the people are fed.

The astonishing truthful moments in the film come not from the story but from the material it has used from contemporary history. That this should happen in Hollywood is indeed a miracle.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by

H. E. BLYTH

W.F.N. Selection

A Slight Case of Murder	* * *
Blockade	*
Owd Bob	*

Other Films covered in this issue:

Break the News

Test Pilot

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

The Challenge

We're Going to be Rich

The Girl of the Golden West

Sailing Along

Jezebel

J'Accuse

L'Équipage

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

(Norman Taurog—Selznick International.)
Tommy Kelly, Ann Gillis, Jackie Moran.

This should have been called *Children in Colour*. Such a cavalcade of infancy in bloom, complete down to the last freckle, has not been seen on the screen before. The weakness of David Selznick's very beautiful and painstaking adaptation of the Mark Twain classic is that it has been treated a little too reverentially. Situations are laboured, the humour creaks and the "love affairs" of the children are a trifle too precocious. Nothing rings true. Fortunately, there is a long and superb thrill when Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher are lost in a vast cave, stuffed with all the resources of Technicolor and echoing with eerie sound. This scene is one of the finest technical achievements in screen history.

Tommy Kelly is a most attractive little boy. Ann Gillis is his plump and promising partner. David Holt makes a good job of Tom's priggish half-brother, Sid. There should have been more of Jackie Moran as Huckleberry Finn. May Robson is admirable as Aunt Polly, especially in her repressed emotions, and the Mississippi is magnificent, though one sees too little of it. Final opinion is that this day and age have lost touch with Mark Twain, but that is neither his fault nor that of Norman Taurog, who directed the film.

—G. A. Atkinson, *The Sunday Referee*

The two children, Tommy Kelly and Ann Gillis, bear upon their slim shoulders the weight of the latest film of Mark Twain's story. They perform with a freshness that has nothing to do with the expert behaviour of the usual actors from stage nurseries, are funny and teary and frightened and heroic, and altogether very much the Mark Twain children. Norman Taurog officially directed them, but one guesses he must almost have been sensible enough to let them direct him and that he took their word for what they ought to do in this predicament and that. Especially does the film triumph in its scenes of poignance and of terror, in those of out-and-out panic, as in the final cave scenes, for instance ; and I don't think the followers of our country's master humorist will be surprised or chagrined to find *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* primarily not a funny picture. Brother Sid Sawyer gets a tomato or a shortcake smack in the face, which is familiar Sennett fare, but also, I suspect, good old-fashioned Missouri. Injun Joe, too, is allowed a bit of knife-throwing in the melo style, which is a bit beyond the borders of the general idea. But I suppose these bits are just put in to amuse youngsters in the audience. That the whole thing is washed in Technicolor didn't bother me except for a lurid sunset or two. Children can stand the dyes, I guess, or perhaps, as times goes on, I am becoming acclimated to Technicolor myself.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

The Challenge

(Milton Rosmer—G.F.D.)
Luis Trenker, Robert Douglas.

The ascent of the Matterhorn by Edward Whymper and his party in 1864 was sufficiently dramatic in all its attendant circumstances, and when these have been touched up—the film explicitly claims the usual licence to be inaccurate in detail—there is certainly enough material for a plot. There is the rivalry with the Italian party, Whymper's extraordinary decision to climb the mountain from what seemed an impossible side, the appalling disaster after the peak had been won, and, finally, the suspicion that Whymper had cut the rope to free himself.

But everything is very properly subordinate to the actual climb, which is represented with startling realism and most skilfully prolonged suspense. The photography is magnificent, and a hundred ingenious devices are used to make the spectator feel himself at one with climbers, giddy when they contemplate the abysses below them, and helpless when they slip. The climb is, in fact, so extremely well done that the episode with which the film ends, when Whymper is almost lynched by angry villagers and in the nick of time proved innocent of cutting the rope, seems uncommonly tame, even though everything is done to make it dramatic, and even melodramatic.

—*The Times*

There are passages in this wonderfully contrived picture which have a shuddering actuality. The point of the story of Whymper's conquest of the Matterhorn, as it is told here, is a guide's heroism in undertaking a lone climb to bring back the ends of a rope and thus prove (though he meant otherwise) that it broke through fraying instead of being cut by the great mountaineer to save his own skin. Four men were killed through the breaking of the rope and the scene in which their bodies go hurtling through thousands of feet, bouncing upon rocks during the fall, is so terrifying that one needs the hasty reflection that, whatever happened in the disaster of seventy years ago, here they are dummies.

But the climbing sequences we see were performed on the mountain itself. There is no hint of deception or fake about them. One shivers responsively at the contemplation of these hazards. The actors concerned seem to be taking the chances that were taken by the characters in the story.

—A. T. Borthwick, *The News Chronicle*

Test Pilot

(Victor Fleming—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Myrna Loy.

One of the most thrilling pictures I have ever seen, and one of the finest technical achievements of the screen, is Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *Test Pilot*. Clark Gable plays the pilot. I think it is the finest performance of his career. He is tough, yet moving in the intensity of his performance. With him is Spencer Tracy, as his mechanic, a big-hearted, rough, kindly, fatalistic fellow who can take everything as it comes till his pilot really falls in love with a girl who knows that she has entered a life that is a magnificent lunacy that must end in a mental breakdown or widowhood at any moment. The girl's brave realisation almost breaks him down till finally, when he is dying after an accident, he whispers, "This is a break for me. Now I shall never

have to go and tell her." Tracy gives one of those superbly fine performances that seem so easy to him. He seems to key up the tension of the whole picture by his quiet, restrained, yet emotionally effective acting. Myrna Loy is the girl. She, too, goes through all the emotions from gaiety to hysteria. It is also the best thing she has done. Lionel Barrymore, Samuel Hinds and several other well-known people are in the cast, but the trio of stars carry it, stepping into the tense, thrilling, ominous, splendidly courageous spirit of the film. *Test Pilot* sets an altitude record for the films: it will probably do the same thing for the takings at the box-office.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

The flying scenes in this picture are about the best since *Hell's Angels*. But what points the film gains on flying, it rather tends to lose on sentiment. Gable is the tough, drinking pilot of test machines . . . the man who has to take a brand new machine up and put it through tricks it will never be asked to do again. The batting average works out at around a crack-up every three trips. Gable gives one of the best performances of his career. He is tough, but moving and tense. That grand actor, Spencer Tracy, again turns in one of his deceptively easy-looking bits of acting. His quiet, unemotional playing serves to heighten the tension of Myrna Loy and Gable. Myrna shows that crazy comedy hasn't robbed her of the power of portraying grief and drama. It is unbelievable that the same firm could turn out *Test Pilot* and *Girl of the Golden West*. And, by the way, a lot of this picture is in close-up. Nearly every shot of Clark Gable and Myrna Loy is a full-face close-up. Which leads me into thought. Myrna Loy is now over thirty, Gable bordering forty. For ten years they've been at the top of the tree. And there's nobody to succeed them. The star building system of Hollywood doesn't seem to be working. Five years, they used to say. Then you're through. M.-G.-M. have proved how wrong that system is. In ten years they've made practically no attempt to build any new stars other than their present list of Gable, Garbo, Loy, Crawford and the rest.

—Jasper Long, *The Sunday Pictorial*

Owd Bob

(Robert Stevenson—Gainsborough.)
Will Fyffe, John Loder, Margaret Lockwood.

A Scottish folk-tale of a cantankerous old sheepherder and his dog, Black Wull. Both are treacherous, sly creatures, distrusted by the town folk and feared by neighbourhood sheep owners. McAdam, the sheepherder, is a drunkard; Black Wull is part wolf, so when sheep are found slaughtered on the fells every morning, the townsfolk band together and accuse the whiskey-befuddled McAdam of the crime. The penalty is that he must kill Black Wull. Throughout this legend is a refreshing and authentic atmosphere of an unfamiliar cinema people. The leisurely excitement of the sheepherding contests, the caustic humour of the rustic, hardy partying, the poignancy of McAdam's moment of retribution—all these are beautifully, serenely done. Both the photography and the acting have the same unpretentious sturdiness of the moors upon which they take place. *Folk-lore of infinite riches.* —*Stage*

I have just seen *Owd Bob* and like it so much that I find it difficult not to write extravagantly about it. I am anxious not to spoil it for you by overpraise, because the film itself is so very slight and simple. It is just a story of Cumberland shepherds and their dogs, the annual excitement of the sheep-dog trials, and the common threat to the dales of a dog that runs wild and becomes a killer. People who like their pictures smart and spectacular may find it tedious. I thought

"Has taken herself more seriously . . ."

it fascinating, and, as a born Northerner, I was grateful for the Eskdale scenes, and couldn't have enough of them. To see those dark, rain-piled skies again, after the hard brilliance of Californian sunshine, and the decorum of Elstree and Denham, was as good as a holiday to me.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

The way in which the camera follows the movements of the sheep-dogs leaves an impression of great beauty and extreme intelligence. The sheep-dog Owd Bob, like his only serious competitor Black Wull, is seen momentarily on the skyline, and in every action of his body there is something akin to poetry. The film might well have gained considerably by an unhappy ending for the humans and a longer innings for the dogs. —*The Times*

We're Going to be Rich

(Monty Banks—20th Century-Fox.)
Gracie Fields, Victor McLaglen, Brian Donlevy.

The Elysian Fields has not yet been photographed. I mean that our Gracie, the cheerful Melba of the music-halls, has not been translated satisfactorily to the screen. Twentieth Century-Fox sent an exhibition to the English hinterland to find, photograph and flaunt her. The expedition cost something more than £200,000. It vowed to get away from the "mill girl makes good on stage" theme, done to death by British producers. It said, presumably, "This is our chance to make Gracie an international star. Let's go". They've gone, and I do not think that the resulting picture, *We're Going to be Rich*, shoves Miss Fields any nearer the Californian stars.

Miss Fields is subdued. She cracks only one music-hall joke after a song called "Walter, Walter" ("take me to the altar"). And I thought her best number was "There is a tavern in the town", a distinctively appropriate ditty in view of McLaglen's thirst. Apart from the singing, the really satisfactory events are the fights, the bare-knuckle affair between McLaglen and Don McCorkindale, and the tin-tray knock-down by Gracie, McLaglen being again the loser. Considering the money that it cost, *We're Going to be Rich* is a disappointment. What they call "production value" is there, but the story lies buried underneath it.

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

It has been said that Gracie Fields's most ardent admirers will not take kindly to *We're Going to be Rich*. If this is so, it is hard to see why. Here for once she has been given a good, if albeit a simple, story, as well as a capable supporting cast who can help to take the weight of the production off her shoulders, and a most satisfactory background. In consequence she has less to do, but in the past she has always had too much. Moreover, her comedy is kept in its place, and although she sings as wide a selection of her famous songs as anyone could desire, she yet makes us laugh only while she is singing them, and for the rest is concerned with a serious part which she plays with conviction and restraint. That she should be thus cast is surely no mistake. She is still "Our Gracie", no doubt, but of recent years she has taken herself more seriously, and her public have seemed willing that she should do so. For these reasons we are of the opinion that this is her best picture, and there are other reasons as well. Monty Banks's Johannesburg provides a fine period setting, and his crowd of extra players have risen nobly to the occasion. For those who like their entertainment straightforward and vigorous, we can confidently recommend *We're Going to be Rich;* it has about it the flavour of the good old Westerns, when the villain hit the hero over the head with a table, and the hero then threw him down three flights of stairs.

—H. E. Blyth, *World Film News*

Break the News

(René Clair—G.F.D.)
Jack Buchanan, Maurice Chevalier, June Knight.

René Clair's second picture in English is nearly as good as his first. And as the comparison is with *The Ghost Goes West*, the failure is a conspicuous success. *Break the News* is certainly the cleverest and most amusing comedy—as well as being the most distinguished piece of light-hearted film-making—to come out of a British studio since *The Ghost*. The French director who a few years ago couldn't speak the language now does not merely handle it with brilliance, but contrives to preserve his native wit, delicacy of touch, and generally to make grown-up pictures for grown-up audiences, a gift which seems more and more to be the speciality of the French.

This is a typical Clair joke. From the star point of view it is Maurice Chevalier's picture, a great and welcome come-back for a comedy artist of genius. His partner is Jack Buchanan, modest in the part he plays, obviously not intending to be the star in his own production enterprise, but doing his job with skill and charm.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

It may be inevitable that the supposed requirements of the English market should act as an effective check upon M. René Clair's imagination, but this film does at any rate give him an occasional opportunity of getting his own back. For it begins and ends with a malicious parody of English musical comedy, describing its haphazard construction and exposing the inability of all those concerned in it either to criticise their work or even to judge whether it will be a popular success.

At the beginning M. Maurice Chevalier and Mr. Jack Buchanan appear as a pair of grotesquely ineffectual comedians—their imitation is almost too like the real thing to be altogether enjoyable—and even this little opportunity is taken from them by the actress-producer, a creature whom Miss June Knight and M. Clair between them manage to make singularly disagreeable. At the end the comedians have revived a decrepit musical comedy by making themselves well known, and the actress and her satellites, watching them perform exactly the same turn as before, exclaim with evident sincerity "Great artists, Great artists. . . ." In all this M. Clair's fancy is often apparent, but there are passages where the farce runs slowly or is burdened with conventional humour.

—*The Times*

Critical Summary.

It is all rather worrying about Clair. Although "Break the News" is witty and caustic and very amusing, it is yet a little disappointing. Perhaps the memory of earlier things is still too fresh in the mind, and just as we are to-day blaming Lubitsch because he does not seem able to recapture the sparkle and brilliance of "Trouble in Paradise", so do we look on Clair's present work and think only of "Sous Les Toits" and "Le Million". Yet there is no reason to suppose that inspiration is dead; it is lacking only for the moment, and will return. A batsman cannot make a hundred in every innings, nor can a director be at his best in every picture, dependent as he is on the mood of his producers and script writers. "The Ghost" we still hold to be one of the three best pictures ever to be made in this country, and for that we must be profoundly grateful to Clair. His screen career has been one of ups and downs, but if he was going to let himself be beaten by the downs he would have given up long ago—probably after the reception given to "The Italian Straw Hat".

The Girl of the Golden West

(Robert Z. Leonard—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, Walter Pidgeon, Leo Carrillo.

David Belasco's vintage (circa 1904) melodrama, *The Girl of the Golden West*, is back in town again, bringing with it memories of that fabulous pressbook issued by the Warners when they released their second film version of it in 1930:

"'THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST'
With 12 Smashing Anti-climaxes
and One Terrific Climax
That You'll Never Forget!!!"

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, sponsor of the 1938 —or Nelson Eddy-Jeanette MacDonald— version is not exactly bragging about the anti-climaxes, but they are there, at least twelve of them, and Gounod's "Ave Maria" and Liszt's "Liebestraum" as well.

The production proceeds through its warm, sepia-toned bath by leisurely stages, opening formally with a prologue, closing formally with an epilogue, and the worst we can say for it is that it is a hopelessly old-fashioned piece of operatic machinery. There's no point in being nasty about these things. Either you like tapioca or you don't. A purely personal reaction is that it is as dated as a tin bathtub in its story and presentation, but redeemed by the singing of its singing stars. At best, we give it a fair rating and suggest that Mr. Belasco's Golden West Girl be permanently retired from now on.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

"Altitude record for films .."

Lots of people adore glorified vocal banditry, Spanish-English dialect, deafening massed fiestas, jealous senoritas, loud laughter without jokes and Bad Men shedding tears at top-notes. Maybe I am an exception. Over-elaborate and as long as the Great North Road, it is set in the early Covered Wagon Age. Miss MacDonald, local licensed victualler, and Mr. Eddy, with a price on his head, sing nobly and spout lines of no special mental level in the most artificial plot for some time. Puccini wrote an opera on the story. It is a waste of time cocking an ear for his strains, for they aren't there. Just copyright trouble. Musical folk will be swamped by the glutinous new tunes and puzzled to know how "Liebestraum" and Gounod's "Ave Maria" could be sung years before they were composed. A pianist is even made to say that he played the Liszt aria in London "before the King!" Walter Pidgeon, Leo Carillo, Buddy Ebsen and H. B. Warner are also imbedded in this florid panorama.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

Critical Summary.

This picture was not generally well received, and indeed one reviewer was so outspoken that the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer company took the unusual step of banning him from their Press shows in consequence. We are not concerned with this undignified squabble, but if the notice itself was rather too vehement in the first place, we cannot but feel that M.-G.-M. would have been far wiser to have ignored it. As it is, nobody seems to have come out of the affair very well, and there will be the inevitable suggestion that the biggest film producing company in the world cannot take it. These long musicals are beginning to irk some people not a little, and long musicals, like the mighty Wurlitzer and the Marx Brothers, have ever had the power to make some filmgoers see red. But good or bad, they are nearly all, nowadays, far too long, and that is a fault which is very easily rectified.

Sailing Along

(Sonnie Hale—Gaumont-British.)
Jessie Matthews, Roland Young, Jack Whiting, Barry Mackay, Noel Madison, Alistair Sim.

When Miss Jessie Matthews dances I wish her not so much a wave o' the sea—for I am not so greedy of her talent as Florizel was of Perdita's—but rather a wave o' the barley, taking the field in one general undulation and leaving it in sunlight and a warm, unruffled rankness. Coming down a peg or two, I should like to be understood as saying that a little of anybody's dancing goes a long

way with me, and that when it comes to a star, even Miss Jessie Matthews, tap-dancing all the way round a Thames barge on which she is supposed to be working, I have had enough long before she has made a complete round of the boat-deck. This barge, we are told, is conveying bricks from Brightlingsea to Reading; it need hardly be said that there is not a glimmer of a brick, even if one had wanted to see a brick. Mr. Young is always excellent as the distinguished millionaire, who eats his heart out while the young couple are enjoying themselves, and Mr. Whiting and Miss Matthews are supremely good at enjoying themselves. When they do dance you wish them a wave o' the Thames at Maidenhead. . . . But no more o' that.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

Miss Matthews sings and dances expertly and is the victim of an inept screenplay that concerns her history from barge girl to musical comedy queen. The picture is a series of monotonous, thinly motivated arguments that get nowhere. *Danger.*

—*Stage*

Jezebel

(William Wyler—Warner Brothers.)
Bette Davis, George Brent, Henry Fonda.

Without the current fashion for *Gone With The Wind*, this might not be reckoned as very much of a story. It is the biography of a spoilt New Orleans minx who jilts the men and shocks the ladies way back in the days when crinolines were crinolines. It is a handsome period piece, adroitly done to catch the present fancy, but Miss Davis is its centre. This bland wisp of steel, who began her screen career as the good girl in a film called *Bad Girl*, is more efficient than all the old-time vamps in her powers of conveying evil. When her frank eyes look full at you and lie, she is dangerous. When she smiles, she is secret and terrifying. Everything she does is cool, measured, with the hint of a keen business brain behind it. I recommend *Jezebel* as the virtuoso performance of a very remarkable young woman, whose incarnadinations are seldom too bad to be true.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary.

In 1936 *Bette Davis won the Motion Picture Academy's Award for her acting in "Dangerous", but if this award does not nowadays carry any great weight with the knowledgeable—in this case the Academy were just a year too late, since her best performance was undoubtedly in "Of Human Bondage"—her success in this field does indicate her general recognition as an emotional actress of marked ability. It has been said that the brothers Warner, with masterly foresight, have forestalled David O. Selznick and "Gone With The Wind" by producing "Jezebel", a story which strongly resembles Miss Margaret Mitchell's novel. Indeed it was even suggested that Selznick should take over the "Jezebel" cast* in toto, *since such few changes were necessary, a suggestion to which the maestro is said to have somewhat acidly replied "I would accept the offer if I, too, were going to make a B picture".*

"Seldom too bad to be true . . . "

J'Accuse

(Abel Gance—French.)
Victor Francen.

A war film of a very different type is *J'Accuse*, founded upon Hans Chlumberg's *Miracle at Verdun*, the play done by Ronald Adam at the Embassy some little while ago. Dead soldiers rise from their graves to find themselves flouted and rejected by the living. When the miracle happens the pacifist is burnt.

Every reaction to this extraordinary film must be personal and individual. There is no denying its force, its poignant and moving arraignment of war. And if you are in the mood to be shocked and horrified by the hurricane of battle, the ghastliness of modern warfare, this is your film. Directed by Abel Gance, with an unswerving fidelity to actuality, it still cannot avoid the element of triangular passion and the love of a soldier for another soldier's wife.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

J'Accuse is an anti-war demonstration of phenomenal force and persuasion, made by Abel Gance on the bones of his silent film of the same name—a film which no picture-goer of the early 'twenties can ever quite get out of his system.

Using as actors the war veterans of 1914–1918, men who carry their scars like banners, it shows the dead of the last war rising from their graves to protest against the threat of a new mobilisation.

There is no panache left for warfare when Gance has done with it. The film is ugly and brutal; emphatically not a film for people who are readily haunted. But as a contemporary document in celluloid, directed to the war-talkers and the war-mongers of every nation, I can recommend it as something incomparably valiant and true.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

L'Équipage

(Anatole Litvak—French.)
Annabella, Charles Vanel, Jean-Pierre Aumont.

I have little or no taste for war pictures. They seldom either interest or thrill me. The best of them invariably arouse in my nature a sense of revolt that commercial value can attach to the reproduction on the screen of man's most destructive instincts. I dislike intensely the idea of men blowing each other to bits. Still more do I detest the notion of men, women and children paying money at cinema box offices to see moving photographs of battles individual or collective. If such pictures must be shown they should be exhibited free of cost and as a national warning.

And apart from the film exploitation of wholesale and legalised national murder, the makers of war films can seldom resist bringing into their narratives passionate love stories and sentimental human conflicts utterly at variance with the main theme of slaughter. They do this presumably to soften the blows, to alleviate the horrors, but with the result that they almost always tend to aggravate them and make them more terrifying and hideous. We cannot bar war pictures from our studios, but we can at least refrain from romanticising warriors or picturing international strife as a background for triangular sex struggles.

The French have no such scruples. For them love in one form or another is inseparable from other symptoms of human madness. And in *L'Équipage*, a French film, superb of its kind, the greatest and most frightful war man has ever indulged in becomes merely a complement to a three-cornered love story. We have the usual fatally fascinating young woman making the acquaintance by Christian name only of the usual handsome young lieutenant and falling hopelessly in love with him, and the subsequent discovery by the lieutenant that she is the wife of his best friend, a partner in the "équipage" he has formed at the front. The three French people in this drama consequently, instead of concentrating upon the job of war, break their respective hearts disentangling themselves, and only the gallant death of the lieutenant in aerial fighting ends the intrigue.

Anatole Litvak, husband of Miriam Hopkins, directed, and his arrangement of the many combats that take place in the air has been brilliantly successful. In the hour and forty minutes of the film there is an enormous amount of sky fighting, and there are some astonishingly beautiful cloud effects.

This is the picture that was taken up by the Americans and converted into *The Woman Between*; in it starred Paul Muni, Miriam Hopkins and Louis Hayward. *L'Équipage* is a more sincere and affecting film, although in comparison with Muni Charles Vanel makes a less interesting husband. The part of the wife as taken by Annabella is statuesquely unsympathetic but much more real than when played by Miriam Hopkins; whilst the strength of the triangle rests mainly upon a moving and convincing performance of the lieutenant by Jean-Pierre Aumont.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

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The MONTH'S RELEASES

Two best releases of the month are *Something To Sing About* and *Bad Man of Brimstone*. The former, which stars Cagney, is a comedy with music, which gives Cagney a chance to show his versatility as a dancer. Story is of an orchestra leader from New York who tries his hand at pictures. He meets with over-night success but sick of being exploited as a gay philanderer, when in reality he is happily married, returns to his former life. The situations arising from the setting are good and the film, most of which is played in Hollywood, works out on original farcical lines. Cagney gives a clever performance, making the most of every opportunity. He is supported by a newcomer, Evelyn Daw.

Wallace Beery returning to Westerns, in *Bad Man of Brimstone*, plays his part with all the toughness and gusto that he can put into it—no crime seems too bad for him, no law too serious to break. His son, however, has been brought up as a law-abiding citizen and as Federal Marshal is forced to hunt his father. The complications that follow, typical

True Confession (*Paramount*)

of all that's good in Westerns, provide great scope for action and thrills, and with Beery more villainous than ever, the picture should give Western fans all they desire.

The Big Broadcast of 1938 is made noteworthy by the return of W. C. Fields. The film, as a whole, is a loosely put together hotch-potch of entertainment, ranging from Martha Raye's scat songs to Kirsten Flagstad's rendering of an aria from "Die Walküre". Plot deals vaguely with a trans-Atlantic race between two liners. Fields, in good form, does his burlesque golf match—with the addition of a scooter this time—and a game of billiards, but has to work hard against thin material and a poor production.

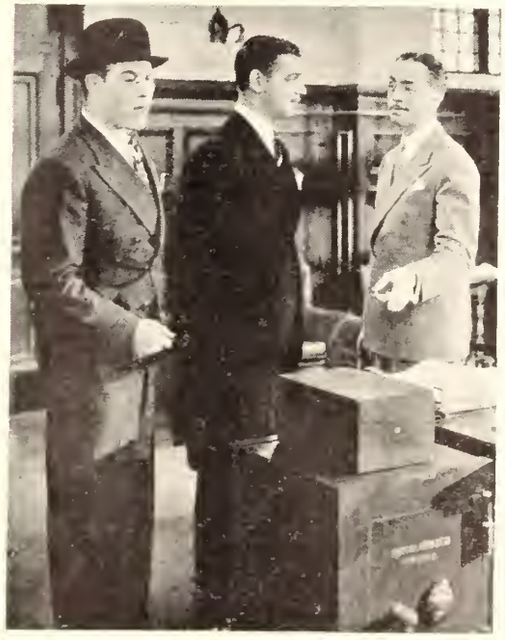
From Cecil B. De Mille comes his annual spectacle, *The Buccaneer*. Staged in the usual De Mille style with the screen always full, the film tells the story of Jean Lafitte, patriotic pirate, who saved New Orleans from the British. Production is spectacular and lengthy, but that does not prevent Fredric March from turning in a good performance as Jean Lafitte. Franciska Gaal has the feminine lead.

A good trio of comedies is to be seen everywhere this month. *Merrily We Live* with Constance Bennett, and *True Confession* with Carole Lombard are both among the best of the crazy comedies now in vogue. Of a different kind is *I See Ice* with George Formby. The star is well up to his usual form in a production that gives him more opportunities than usual. In *Love and Hisses* the Walter Winchell–Ben Bernie battle continues, aided this time by Simone Simon—not so good as *Wake Up and Live*.

Four re-issues of considerable importance appear this month. One, that great gangster film *Scarface* with Paul Muni giving a dynamic performance as an ambitious racketeer, is one of the most moving and brutal exposés of the American gangster ever made. *Manhattan Melodrama*, starring William Powell, Clark Gable, and Myrna Loy deals with the same subject in a more genteel way—but is still an exciting and well-acted story of gangsterdom. Charles Laughton and Norma Shearer return in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, and Garbo, with Ramon Novarro, comes back in the spy drama *Mata Hari*.

Two films which will probably be played as second features are worthy of note. *Dangerous To Know*, an adaptation of Edgar Wallace's famous play *On The Spot* tells of a rich gangster's ruthless methods to get himself into high society. The plot is extremely clever and the dialogue brisk. Akim Tamiroff as the gangster acts well and forceful direction and good atmosphere make the film first-class entertainment. The other, *Of Human Hearts*, is a period drama of a rather serious character. It is made noteworthy by the fine acting of Walter Huston and Beulah Bondi.

Other releases include *Romance For Three*, a comedy with good dialogue and great team-work by Frank Morgan, Robert Young and a host of sound actors; *Love Is a Headache*, with Franchot Tone; a sincere production of the *Dead End* type, *Boy of the Streets*, with Jackie Cooper, and *Penitentiary*, a prison drama, first-class entertainment of its kind.



Manhattan Melodrama (*M.G.M*)

JULY RELEASES

Scarface (Ace Films) * * *
DIRECTOR: Howard Hawks
STARRING: Paul Muni, George Raft, Ann Dvorak, Karen Morley, Boris Karloff
(Reviewed April)

Bad Man of Brimstone (M.-G.-M.) *
DIRECTOR: J. Walter Ruben
STARRING: Wallace Beery, Virginia Bruce, Denis O'Keefe
(Reviewed March)

Of Human Hearts (M.-G.-M.) *
DIRECTOR: Clarence Brown
STARRING: Walter Huston, James Stewart, Beulah Bondi
(Reviewed April)

Something To Sing About (Grand National) *
DIRECTOR: Victor Schertzinger
STARRING: James Cagney, Evelyn Daw
(Reviewed March)

True Confession (Paramount) *
DIRECTOR: Wesley Ruggles
STARRING: Carole Lombard, Fred MacMurray, John Barrymore
(Reviewed February)

Barretts of Wimpole Street (M.-G.-M.) *
DIRECTOR: Sidney Franklin
STARRING: Charles Laughton, Norma Shearer, Fredric March

Manhattan Melodrama (M.-G.-M.) *
DIRECTOR: W. S. Van Dyke
STARRING: William Powell, Myrna Loy, Clark Gable

Big Broadcast of 1938 (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Mitchell Leisen
STARRING: W. C. Fields, Martha Raye, Dorothy Lamour

Boy of the Streets (Pathé)
DIRECTOR: William Nigh
STARRING: Jackie Cooper, Maureen O'Connor

The Buccaneer (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Cecil B. De Mille
STARRING: Fredric March, Franciska Gaal, Akim Tamiroff

Merrily We Live (M.-G.-M.)
DIRECTOR: Norman Z. McLeod
STARRING: Constance Bennett, Brian Aherne, Billie Burke, Alan Mowbray

Safe Seat

Are you satisfied with the seat you pay your one-and-six for at the cinema? Is it the sort of thing you wanted? Do you feel at home in it? Does it leave anything to be desired? Don't be afraid to say if it does.

It does, doesn't it? I agree with you. Here, then, is my list of the additions that might with advantage be made to the cinema seat as we know it to-day:

A short length of lead-piping for use on wisecrack-repeaters, those who've seen the film before and know what's coming, and those who haven't seen the film before but can guess what's coming.

A portable anæsthetic outfit, controlled by the patient himself.

A small pair of garden-shears for pruning superfluous floral decorations from the hat of the lady in front.

A rear-view mirror to ascertain whether the fellow behind is having a fit or just enjoying the picture.

A box of rockets for attracting the attention of cigarette-girls.

A breeches-buoy outfit for visiting friends in the balcony.

An oxygen-tent.

A box of coloured chalks for drawing on bald heads in the row in front.

A set of phosphorescent chess-men for use during travelogues.

A stock-whip for silencing Mothers' Meetings three rows forward.

A ferret to fetch your hat.

A sawn-off shotgun for the organist.

A few good books to keep your mind off the usherettes.

A few good usherettes.

A hazel-twig for water-divining.

A small Venetian blind which can be attached to the brim of the hat and lowered at the first sign of Dick Powell.

If any of my readers have further suggestions to make on the subject, I shall be happy to receive them. Address your envelopes to "Auntie Gwen, c/o The Editor (the beast), *World Film News*." And don't forget to enclose the screw-cap from a sack of Portland cement. More next week, chicks, if Auntie's hangover is better.

MUSICAL NOTE

According to Ripley, the "Believe It Or Not" maestro, there is a Bolivian musical instrument called the Charango, which requires a haircut once a year. It is made of an armadillo shell, which constantly grows hair.

They do say that Bolivians calling at the local hairdresser's hate being kept waiting by a Charango. Evidently the Charango is very fussy about the way its hair sets at the back, and always likes a shampoo afterwards and hot towels. It is said to have a plaintive sound, but why a Charango should complain when it only has to go to the barber's once a year, beats me. The more artistic Charangos grow their hair long over the ears and are rather difficult to get on with.

Reading about this reminded me of a 'cello I once had that suffered terribly from boils. Many's the night I sat up with it, applying hot fomentations, and what thanks did I get? But that's the way of the world, isn't it? You give up the best years of your life to a musical instrument, and all the time it's yearning to go out into the world and join a Corner House Gypsy Orchestra.

Next week: How To Cure Bad Breath in Oboes.

Psychological Moment

Neuroses red,
Neuroses blue,
I'm an introvert,
What are you?

You need a neurosis to be a success,
A cosy neurosis will help you progress.
If you've a cute complex, a neat little mania,
Just notice how eagerly friends entertain ya.
It's smart to be screwey, it's dull to be sane,
It's chic to be sick when you travel by train–
Your mother was scared by a ticket-collector—
Of course she was also once scared by the rector,
Which accounts for your urge to perform the Big Apple
Whenever you're passing a Methodist Chapel.
You've got to do things that are frightfully Freudian,
Like letting off stink-bombs inside of the Odeon,
Or, when out at luncheon, start smacking the jellies—
You'll find a good reason in Havelock Ellis.

But don't go to Harley Street
With your delusions—
They'll only prescribe you
A nice dose of Kruschens.

Isn't he like his Father—especially in that Gas-Mask

At any time now your local air raid warden may call at your home with gas-masks in all sizes to fit a family.

There will be three sizes of gas-masks for adults, a "baby's bag" and an intermediate size for children between the ages of two and five. —News Item.

Put little Bill in his baby-bag, Mother,
And watch the tot struggle for breath;
An occasional puff
At the pump is enough
To prevent him from choking to death.
So put little Bill in his baby-bag, Mother,
And if he complains of the fug,
We must tell the young ass
That it's better than gas—
He'll be snug as a bug i[illegible] a rug,
Glug-glug,
Yes, as snug as a b[illegible] in a rug.
So put little Bill i[illegible] baby-bag, Mother,
As soon as his b[illegible] 's sung.
Did I hear you say [illegible]?—
That he's turned a b[illegible]?—
Well, the child always was highly-strung.
Now put little Bill in his baby-bag, Mother,
While we get the bomb-shelter dug;
If he looks a bit blue,
Pop his bottle in, too—
He'll be snug as a bug in a rug,
Glug-glug,
Yes, as snug as a bug in a rug. Glug!

Sayings

"A guy needs a little credit before his wedding."—*Jackie Coogan.*

"I may seem synthetic on the screen, but at heart I am just a mother."—*Marlene Dietrich.*

"I am a firm believer in soap and I strongly advise girls to wash their faces with it."—*Mary Pickford.*

"The most intoxicating thing in Hollywood isn't the liquor, but the flattery."—*Bette Davis.*

PET'S CORNER

In a silver-handled coffin, lined with purple satin, there was laid to rest "the only chimpanzee in Hollywood able to express emotion." —News item.

Many film-fans who, on reading these lines, were afraid that they might refer to one of their favourite actors, were immediately reassured by the words "able to express emotion."

LORUM

MY COUNTRY, 'TIS OF THEE

Most of us in England know the skyline of New York though we may be ignorant of the main streets of Manchester . . . and most of us would be more at home in the Grand Central Station, New York, than in the Joint Station at Perth.

—Thomas Baird in *World Film News.*

We're familiar with the Bowery
And its accents sweet and flowery,
We're *au fait* with all that happens in the Bronx.
And (unless we're frequent users)
We know less of Stepney boozers
Than we do of San Francisco honky-tonks.

We're familiar with the blaring
Of the Yank expresses tearing
Coast-to-coast with stern-faced business men on board.
Whereas if we heard the hooting
Of the ten-fifteen from Tooting
It would fail, I'm sure, to strike an answ'ring chord.

We're familiar with their news-stands
And their roadside barbecue-stands,
And their rackets and their roadsters and their rye.
We know what a sophomore is
From their Yale and Harvard stories,
But to them a freshman's just a gabby guy.

Don't you think it rather phoney
That the island christened Coney
Should be better known to us than that of Man?
Would we flock one half so gaily
To a picture of Disraeli
As we do to hunt a clue with Charlie Chan?

Take the U.S. Army doughboy,
Born and bred to be a showboy,
Schooled to face the shot and never give a damn.
See how neatly he expires
Just as Uncle Sam requires
(And as long as Goldwyn's playing Uncle Sam).

Watch the good old U.S. Navy
Gets its fair share of the gravy
In the titles on the propaganda pics.
Now, if I remember rightly,
Britain's tars are pretty sprightly,
But it seems red tape and celluloid don't mix.

Show yourselves as true-blue Britons!
Never pay to gain admittance
To films not wholly British in their scenes.
You'll find they often sneak in
'Twixt a travel-talk on Pekin
And a saga of the U.S.A. Marines.

Let this be a lesson to you

An increased supply of cultural and educational films is announced by the Sub-Standard Cinematograph Association.

"Teaching films," it is stated, "are being planned to make clear the complicated processes of chemistry and botany—even of mathematics."

—News Item

There would seem to be an opportunity here for a wide-awake producer to step in and clean up big by putting mathematics on a sound, sexy, cinematic basis.

Imagine Clark Gable, Myrna Loy and Bill Powell in a dramatisation of the old problem of a, b and c. Gable and Loy would, of course, be the base of the triangle with Powell, in faultlessly cut brackets, constantly hanging around the hypotenuse. For the younger pupils we could show Laurel and Hardy in the sure-fire comedy roles of X and Y, the boys who were constantly digging fields or filling cisterns. We might, I think, alter the text of the original problem sufficiently to have Y fall flat on his face in his own cistern, or have him sit down backwards on the fork which X had laid down after a hard bout of field-digging. That ought to get the lower fourth rolling in the aisles.

But why not go the whole hog with a full-length feature film—a mathematical smash-hit in glorious Technicolor? Something like this:

I'M NO ANGLE

Based on a Story by Bud Euclid.

A Rhomboid ..... Mae West
The Square on the Hypotenuse
Kath Hepburn
Vulgar Fractions.... The Ritz Brothers
A Parallelogram..... Gary Cooper
Simple Division.....George Arliss
A Recurring Decimal Lionel Barrymore
And the Lovely Logarhythm Girls

* * *

"I've been peeling off layers of theatrical tinsel. I find that under the wrapping there's some one I want to know."—*Gilda Gray.*

Loose Lines

Restaurants ending in -elli
Are generally smelly.

Those ending in -etta
Are little betta.

I have found
There are two kinds of hound.
The kind that makes eyes at me,
And the kind that flies at me.

* * *

Hip! Hip!
Everyone cheers,
Beverly Nichols
Has sat on the shears.

"H'YA TOOTS"

BOOK REVIEWS

I SHOULD HAVE STAYED HOME

By Horace McCoy
(Arthur Barker, 7*s.* 6*d.*)

"Did anyone ever tell you that you were handsome?" she asked. "No Ma'am," I said, feeling my cheeks get hot. "You are. You're the handsomest boy I've ever seen in my life". I looked away, out of the window. She put her drink on the tray and leaned over, her body touched mine.

"And I'm crazy about you", she said. "I'm mad about you." Before I could do or say anything she took my head in her hands, kissing me all over the face and eyes and biting my ear. I finally pushed her away, standing up. She pulled me down beside her again. "Please—Please" she said. "Don't you like me a little?" "Of course I like you, I like you a lot. Why shouldn't I? You've been nice to me." "Kiss me," she said. "Touch me. Hit me. Anything". I kissed her on the lips. "Not like that," she said, "Not like that. Like this".

It's a funny thing, but practically all the novels that come from Hollywood are about the same thing. *Hollywood Girl*, *Hollywood Cemetery*, *The Promised Land* and finally this one *I Should Have Stayed Home* by Horace McCoy, a scenario writer. Maybe, it was because of his profession that McCoy thought out the new angle and chose a man as his heroine. The book is claimed to be "A plain unvarnished account of the struggles of an ordinary man in a community where greed and jealousy predominate", the story of an extra's troubles. But if as much attention had been paid to the extra proper as has been paid to the sugaring it would have been a great deal better book than it is. Horace McCoy is a very fine writer and his earlier book *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* gave the real inside story of a dancing marathon.

I Should Have Stayed Home, although written with the same punch, lacks the realism and information of far more important things than rapes by rich widows.

But all the same, there must be a reason why the Hollywood novelists concentrate on Sodom and Gomorrah and Hollywood.

JOHN TAYLOR.

FILMS IN THE MAKING

By Robb Lawson
(Pitman, 2*s.*)

This is a brief outline of the technicalities of movies how they came to move, how sound works, how a film is made, how cinemas developed, and so on. Fine. We need more non-academic exponents of the important mechanical adjuncts of modern life that so many people take for granted. And where pictures are concerned Mr. Lawson has many qualifications for the job. Mr. Lawson has told the story of movies ably enough; but his book would have gained strength by a more considered approach to the technical processes he sets out to clarify.

ACTUALITY IN SCHOOL

By G. J. Cons and Catherine Fletcher
(Methuen, 2*s.* 6*d.*)

Two lecturers at Goldsmith's College, having long been dissatisfied with an educational tradition which prefers the past definite to the present indicative, and has never recognised the meaning of the words "here and now", decided to start something. They organised search parties in the neighbourhood of Kinder Street Junior Mixed School, to see what could be discovered about contemporary life. Among the fauna brought in for examination in successive expeditions were a postman, a dustman, a sewerman, and a fireman. The children put these gentlemen on the stand, and asked them a large number of questions.

What do you do if you can't see the numbers? What happens if you lose a registered letter? Do you buy your own uniform? What time do you get up in the morning? Do you get tips? Do you ever find valuables in the dustbins? What do you do with all the rubbish? What was the greatest fire you ever went to? If you got your leg burnt off, would you have to leave the fire? And many more.

The gentlemen were worthy of the name, and answered all the questions faithfully. Following these interviews, field expeditions took the young explorers to sorting offices, dairy farms, factories, blacksmiths' shops, and other parts of darkest England. In the course of a visit to G.P.O. Headquarters, some of the children cast eyes for the first time on the mighty Thames, rolling slowly seawards through the unknown jungles of London.

Described as an educational experiment, this venture of Cons and Fletcher flies in the face of many well established traditions, not only in the thing taught but also in the method. As for the latter, the children are allowed to ask the questions, and demonstrate their interest. This is heretical, for the Socratic method in general use is for the teacher to ask all the questions and demonstrate his omniscience in the face of their ignorance. Again, Cons and Fletcher take the children out of school for these lessons, contrary to the universal practice of keeping them on hard benches till the bell goes and punishing them from time to time for fidgeting and not listening.

Worst of all, however, the material is useful and interesting in itself and the children enjoy learning it. This is positively subversive. There will be time enough for the frivolities of London sewers and the gaieties of the sanitary services when the youth of the country knows all about Lady Jane Grey, Popocatepetl, the Black Death, Martin Luther, and last but not least, the pluperfect subjunctive.

R.F.

JUNE IN SKYE

By Elizabeth Coxhead
(Cassell, 7*s.* 6*d.*)

Miss Coxhead has made a good job of this novel *June in Skye*. The main body of the book is devoted to mountaineering and it will be a surprise to some that so many technical terms are connected with that seemingly simple sport. Skye is painted as the escapist's paradise, but Miss Coxhead only allows it to be a temporary escape for her characters. She picks them from various walks of life. The heroine is a sophisticated young woman from London; the hero an unemployed youth from Glasgow. The various problems connected with their love affair are not shirked, but unfortunately the book leaves them before the problems are to appear in concrete form in the slums of Glasgow. A sequel to the novel might prove more interesting, though possibly less colourful.

Miss Coxhead has introduced several characters from the film world, but has not elaborated them. They belong to a unit engaged on travel films and the rough draft of their personalities looks promising. It is a little disappointing that their presence has so little to do with the story, for few books on the people of the film world have yet done justice to the remarkable material for characterisation that exists there.

MARION FRASER.

BOOM TOWN

By Jack O'Connor
(Constable, 7*s.* 6*d.*)

Described as a "Wilder Western", Jack O'Connor's *Boom Town* is a tough-guy novel with a western setting.

The ordinary wild-west story is adventure pure and simple, ignoring characterisation and providing as much action as possible. The cowboys ride, gamble, shoot, fight and, in a few cases, drink. If there is a woman in the story, she is there to provide complications at critical moments in the battle of law against outlaw, sheriff's posse against rustlers, or cowboys against Indians.

Boom Town is more thorough. It is the story of a silver strike, and the consequent uprush of a town. The workin' stiffs do the mining and the gamblers, saloon-keepers and whores live on their money. A syndicate buys the mine, economises on machinery and working expenses, sacrifices safety to quick profits, and brings about the mine explosion which finally unties the plot-complications.

There is plenty of gun-play, much whoring; some stage-coach robbery. An exciting novel, catching something of the sprawling, lusty growth of an Arizona mining town.

CRIME at the BOX-OFFICE

A G Man can be a dead shot and still be blind

An expensively built house on the shores of Lake Weir, near Oklawaha, Florida.

All night long, groups of men watch the house.

Inside, a woman and her son, last free members of a notorious family, hunted from one end of the States to the other, changing cars, names and appearances, hiding, fleeing, crossing and re-crossing trails.

Inside, two machine guns with hundred-shot drums, two shot-guns, three automatic pistols, cartons of ammunition, a rifle and five bullet-proof vests, elevated in after police descriptions into "an arsenal".

Dawn, misty and dew-soaked. A man steps from out a clump of trees and walks away towards the house.

"Freddie! Ma Barker!" he shouts. "We are Federal Officers of the United States Department of Justice!"

There is no answer. He goes on:

"We want you to come out, one at a time. You will not be injured."

Still no answer. Minutes of silence that drag like hours. Sounds of people moving about inside the house.

Then a stream of rifle bullets, whipping up the dust around the man near the house. He dodges hastily for cover while his men divert the stream of bullets away from him by opening fire.

Battle begins. Burst of fire, then lull, then bursts of fire again. Inside, Ma Barker and her son Freddie, fighting their last battle against the law, outside nearly a score of police and G Men under cover. The G Men begin to concentrate their fire into the windows from which the two inside are firing.

Finally there comes no answering fire from inside. Tear gas is then fired in. Still no response. The G Men slowly and carefully advance on the house.

On the floor of an upstairs bedroom, they find Freddie Barker and his mother. Freddie, still clutching his gun, is pierced by eleven bullets; his mother, a machine gun, still hot, across her body, lies pierced by three bullets, one of which has gone through the heart.

This is one of the many battles described by J. Edgar Hoover in his book *Persons in Hiding* (Dent 8*s.* 6*d.*). He is the head of America's Federal Police, named G Men, and is largely responsible for depriving us of our screen gangsters and putting G Men in their place. Which may be good police work, but it's bad entertainment. No one likes the policeman hero, especially when, like the G Men of fiction and the films, he is a college boy without humour or humanity. Compare him with the human oddities assembled for our enjoyment in *A Slight Case of Murder* and you'll see why crime—on the screen—will always pay.

The book is one-sided, of course, because J. Edgar Hoover is concerned to show the G Men in the best light, and the mobster in the worst. He tells about many thrilling battles, some exciting chases, some extraordinary characters. For example, Edward William Benz.

Benz was a criminal. He operated, with considerable success, for more than twenty-five years. His best-known exploit was the robbing of the Lincoln National Bank, at Lincoln, Nebraska, in late 1930, where he got away with more than a million

"*Third Degree*" (*March of Time*)

dollars in cash, bonds and commercial paper.

He became a bank robber because, he said, "bank robbers are the aristocracy of the criminal profession". He brought a finesse and a precision to bank robbing that sky-rocketed his reputation among the criminal fraternity, and made him the consultant of scores of intending bank robbers. He advised, re-planned, organised and guided bank robberies afterwards carried out by others. A bank robbery by Eddie Benz secured more reverence from the underworld than a Pudovkin picture once got from the élite of the Film Societies.

Besides being an artist in the quick and large scale transfer of bank funds, deposits and accounts, Benz had other interests. They included the collection of valuable first editions: these, I hasten to add, he bought. He owned an extensive library of rare books, including early editions of the works of John Bunyan, Voltaire, and Washington Irving. He was a collector of old coins too, and achieved some reputation in this line among the foremost numismatic agencies.

He was too, *World Film News* readers will be interested to learn, an amateur movie-maker of great enthusiasm, and made, for the amusement of himself and friends, countless films of towns and places of historical interest. He was a golf player of some ability, and spent his leisure at the best hotels or in the classiest holiday resorts.

An interesting person, widely popular among the law-abiding folk with whom he sheltered at various places. The wife of a naval officer is reported to have said to her husband on her death-bed: "We've travelled to lots of places and met pleasant people. But I really believe that evening we spent with Mr. Vaughner and his wife was the happiest night I ever had and he is one of the nicest men I ever met." Mr. Vaughner, of course, was the alias of Eddie Benz. Such testimonials do not impress our Edgar. He doesn't like gangsters and crooks.

Edgar Hoover tells of Baby Face Nelson, who, after the shooting down of Dillinger as he left a performance of *Manhattan Melodrama*, became Public Enemy Number One and was chased with all the forces the G Men could muster. Everywhere Nelson fled for refuge he was told "Get away from here. The Feds are after you. Use your brains. Get going. This is G Man heat." Baby Face would drive all day. Stay the night at some lonely auto camp, or by the road-side to awake in the night and command "Get in those cars, we've got to keep going."

He fought it out with Feds on the road and got away to die, in the house of a small-town politician, from the wounds.

There are a score of these stories: built around the theme that crime does not pay. But they are hand-picked cases out of thousands, stories chosen to boost the G Men and bump the gangster.

Hoover attributes the successes of gangsterism to the great sympathy of the public for the outlaw and their hostility to the police. To the number of people who shelter or aid criminals, or who keep information from the police. He even refers caustically to parents who refuse to inform on their children, wives who won't tell on their husbands. Hoover's hundred per cent American is a stool-pigeon.

Hoover has the policeman's view of society. He omits, as the cause for gangsterism, the one factor which more than any other explains its allure. The "success" racket. The national worship, fostered by Big Business, of the man who gets to the top. The business version of "From Log Cabin to White House", which makes money and not public service the test of greatness.

In the teeming, poverty-ridden tenements the urge is to get out, to get above the rest, to escape into the kind of life enjoyed by the successful ones. To get out as an individual. And the philosophy of Big Business is—Every man for himself. The devil take the hindmost. The weakest to the wall. And so on. One way was through Big Business, open to few.

Another way was through crime, through bootleg liquor. There is, in fact, little difference between Al Capone and the Big Business figures of the States, except that Al is now in jail. Law-breaking, thuggery, the crushing of the competitor, the bribing of courts and the judges, the control of police, the use of thick-ear men, the destruction of competitors' goods, the corruption of politics the business methods are the same.

And, as for bank-robbery, Big Business could give Eddie Benz a ten length start and canter home. And gang-methods? Ask the Trade Unions.

So why not get to work on Big Business, Mr. Hoover?

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.
BURNOPEIELD: Grand — July 11, 4 days
GOOLE: Tower — July 4, 6 days
HULL: Waterloo — July 21, 3 days

Coal Face (Poetic treatment of coal mining).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
SOUND PRODUCTION: Alberto Cavalcanti
ABERDEEN: Topical News Theatre — July 4, 6 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw.
LITTLE SUTTON: Kings — July 4, 3 days
LONGFORD: Stafford — July 14, 4 days
NETHYBRIDGE: Cinema — July 21 & 3, 2 days
NEWTONMORE: Cinema — July 21 & 3, 2 days
PWLLHELI: Town Hall — July 7, 3 days

Granton Trawler (A documentary of deep sea fishing).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: G.P.O. Film Unit.
DIRECTION: John Grierson.
TARLETON: Queens — July 18, 3 days

Islands of the Bounty.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
HULL: Waterloo — July 21, 3 days
LONDON: Royal West London, Edgware Road, W. — July 10, 3 days
TARLETON: Cinema — July 11, 3 days
YOUGHAL: Regal — July 14, 3 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt.
BRIDGENORTH: Palace — July 4, 3 days
WHITSTABLE: Argosy — July 4, 3 days

Power.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
BIRKENHEAD: Super — July 11, 6 days
BOOTLE: Broadway — July 4, 3 days
CHESTER: Music Hall — July 7, 3 days
HAMILTON: La Scala — July 7, 3 days
HARBORNE: Picture House — July 28, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont Palace, Anfield — July 25, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino — July 4, 3 days

Secrets of the Stars (Spotlight on British stages and studios).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Argyle British Productions Ltd.
COVENTRY: Gaumont Palace — July 31, 1 day
DUKINFIELD: Oxford — July 11, 3 days
GILLINGHAM: Grand — July 31, 4 days
HENDON: Classic — July 17, 4 days
LEVENSHULME: Grand — July 28, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Cinema House — July 11, 6 days

Six-Thirty Collection (Documentary of the West End Sorting office).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey.
TARLETON: Queens — July 18, 3 days

Southward Ho! (A journey across Franz-Josef glacier).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: C. E. Hodges.
HENDON: Classic — July 28, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Leicester Sq. — July 4, 3 days
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE: News Theatre — July 18, 6 days
TOOTING: Classic — July 28, 3 days

Sunny Tessin (Survey of the Canton Tessin, Southern Switzerland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
BATH: News Theatre — July 4, 3 days
CROYDON: Classic — July 28, 3 days
DALSTON: Classic — July 21, 3 days
LEEDS: Tatler — July 18, 6 days
PADDINGTON: World News Theatre — July 14, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Rutland — July 11, 3 days
TOOTING: Classic — July 17, 4 days

This Other Eden (A trip down the river Eden, in Westmorland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.
BATH: News Theatre — July 11, 3 days
BOLTON: Rialto — July 25, 6 days
DUKINFIELD: Oxford — July 14, 3 days
HEATON MOOR: Savoy — July 14, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Charing Cross — July 11, 3 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson.
COXHOE: Avenue — July 14, 3 days
FERRYHILL: Pavilion — July 31, 1 day
GRANGETOWN: Lyric — July 11, 3 days

Town and Gown (Buildings, scenery and life of Oxford and Cambridge).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Peter Collin.
CROYDON: Classic — July 10, 4 days
DALSTON: Classic — July 28, 3 days
LEEDS: Tatler — July 4, 6 days
PADDINGTON: World News Theatre — July 28, 3 days
TOOTING: Classic — July 10, 4 days

Tropical Springtime (Travelogue on Costa Rica).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.
BATH: News Theatre — July 14, 3 days
HARROW: Coliseum — July 18, 7 days
SHEFFIELD: Rutland — July 28, 3 days
THORNTON HEATH: State — July 18, 3 days

Valleys of Romance.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
GLOSSOP: Empire — July 4, 3 days
KIRKCALDY: Rialto — July 14, 3 days
LONDON: Tatler, Charing Cross Road — July 25, 3 days
MOTHERWELL: Pavilion — July 7, 3 days
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE: Tatler — July 11, 6 days
WEYMOUTH: Regent — July 7, 3 days
WISHAW: Cinema — July 21, 3 days

Way to the Sea (Documentary of the roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes.
DARTMOUTH: Cinedrome — July 4, 3 days
DENTON: Palace — July 13, 4 days
EASINGTON: Rialto — July 28, 3 days
FOREST HALL: Ritz — July 10, 1 day
GRASSMOOR: Electric — July 14, 3 days
LIMERICK: Lyric — July 14, 3 days
LONDON: Royal West London, Edgware Road, W. — July 11, 3 days
ULVERSTON: Roxy — July 29, 3 days

Wheel and Woe (The evolution of the motor-car).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Liberty.
DIRECTION: W. G. Duncalf.
DALSTON: Classic — July 7, 3 days
GILLINGHAM: Grand — July 24, 4 days
HENDON: Classic — July 3, 4 days
PORTSMOUTH: Classic — July 24, 4 days
SHEFFIELD: Don — July 25, 6 days
SHEFFIELD: Sunbeam — July 11, 3 days

Windmill in Barbados.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: E.M.B.
DIRECTION: Basil Wright.
TARLETON: Queens — July 18, 3 days

Foreign Films

Le Roi S'amuse
DIRECTION: Pierre Colombier
STARRING: Victor Francen, Raimu, Gaby Morlay, Elvire Popescu
LONDON: Academy — Until first week in July

The Last Night (Russian)
DIRECTION: Yu. Raizman
STARRING: I. R. Peltser, S. M. Vecheslov, M. G. Yarotskaya, N. I. Dorokhin
LONDON: Academy — Indefinitely (after *Le Roi S'amuse*)

L'Homme du Jour
DIRECTION: Julien Duvivier
STARRING: Maurice Chevalier, Elvire Popescu
LONDON: Berkeley — Indefinitely

Orage
DIRECTION: Marc Allegret
STARRING: Charles Boyer, Michèle Morgan, Jean-Louis Barrault
LONDON: Curzon — Indefinitely

Thirteen (Russian)
DIRECTION: Michael Romm
STARRING: I. Novoseltsev, Kuzmina, A. Chistyakov
LONDON: Forum — Indefinitely

L'Alibi
DIRECTION: Pierre Chenal
STARRING: Erich von Stroheim, Louis Jouvet, Jany Holt, Albert Préjean
LONDON: Studio One — Indefinitely

SEEN ON EVERY SCREEN

"Recording by Imperial Sound Studios"

This famous credit is to be found on practically every documentary film made in Great Britain and it is a sign that the producer has been discriminating in his choice of recording.

Imperial Sound Studios
84 WARDOUR ST. GER. 1963

'The Challenge' by Elizabeth Coxhead

THE film still does best with simple themes; the Alpine film should therefore be natural, heaven-sent film material, for it has the simplest of all themes: man against mountain, human nerve and wit against the most beautiful and dramatic of Nature's defences. Here is all the thrill of battle without any need of pathos or pity for the conquered; if the man loses he dies a fine death, if the mountain loses it can afford to lose, and lose again a thousand times, before it becomes something we despise.

But just because the Alpine film is so divinely simple, producers are frightened by its simplicity. They give it "plot"; there must, they say, be human interest, feeling obscurely that a victory with no vanquished is inhuman, that excitement so finely distilled will be without savour. And their efforts to graft on plot have never been happy, except in the case of Luis Trenker's *Doomed Battalion*, which was not really a grafting but a faithful copy of what did happen, the Great War brought to the Alps, moulded by them, changed into something less sordid and more nearly heroic.

The Challenge, the second film version to be made of Edward Whymper's Matterhorn ascent, seems to be two films in one, a good film and a feeble one: the climbing epic, directed in Zermatt by Trenker; the "plot", made at home in Denham's spiritually stuffy studios by Milton Rosmer. It is a poor thing, this plot, an attempt to explain the antagonism between Whymper and the native guide Carrel by the machinations of village "villains", rather inadequately played by a set of English comic actors who seem to have strayed out of a very minor Hitchcock.

Carrel and Whymper clashed because they were two strong characters: their feud was as epic as their ascents, and as elemental: Whymper for the Matterhorn and the sport, with already a breath of public-school spirit in his enthusiasm, Carrel for the Matterhorn and his valley, with a peasant's narrow loyalty, a peasant's sturdy resentment of the gentleman and the foreigner. Doubtless, out of respect for the dead and the Censor, the film could not show all this; but enough of it could have been hinted at to spare us the tedium of a manufactured intrigue.

And curiously enough, by their acting, Luis Trenker and Robert Douglas do hint at it; they are closer to history than the parts they play. Trenker inspired by his mountain, and Douglas, one suspects, inspired by Trenker, form a superb human team against their inhuman and splendid enemy, more beautiful than ever through Périnal's lens. The great climbing sequence is very nearly perfect; at all events, it is the best pure representation of man against mountain that the screen has yet given us; more sensational, of course, than any real ascent of the Matterhorn (most of it was shot on the little rocky Riffelhorn), but that is an entirely allowable cinematic licence. Faithfully it follows Whymper's own simple, classic account: the rival parties from the Swiss and Italian sides, the race, Whymper's triumph, and breathless on its heels, tragedy, the broken rope, the four bodies sliding away and dropping silently, down and down, four thousand feet, to their white glacier bed. . . .

And nothing can spoil that; not even an ending of more plot, a ludicrous attempt to work up a second climax by having Carrel rescue Whymper from a lynching by the Zermatt crowd (which seems a poor return to make for Zermatt's loyal co-operation in the film). For all its nonsense, *The Challenge* is a great climbing picture, a monument to Luis Trenker's mountain honesty, and to his sharp

(*continued at the foot of col.* 3)

Cine Technicians' Protest

In your March issue, Mr. Hitchcock, in an interview, saw fit to criticise British technicians.

Whilst wishing to say nothing to detract from Mr. Hitchcock's own very great directorial powers, we do feel that one of the large contributory factors to his success as a British film director has been the first-class crew of British technicians which has co-operated with him. We assume Mr. Hitchcock's comments are based largely upon his own experiences. Almost all Mr. Hitchcock's films have been made by entirely British crews and he has had such leading cameramen as Jack Cox and Bernard Knowles. The photography of Mr. Hitchcock's films has invariably been of the highest possible standard and the absence of good British technicians, particularly cameramen, seems hard to substantiate in the light of such results.

Mr. Hitchcock further states that young men do not take their work seriously enough, and there is too much of this knocking off at 6 o'clock attitude. It happens again that Mr. Hitchcock's own experience has been particularly fortunate in working with one of the few firms with Trade Union labour agreements in every department, including technicians. Mr. Hitchcock's remarks can only be taken as an attack on the policy of trade unions and employers, such as Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, to regulate by agreement the hours and conditions of employees. His own company has expressed appreciation of such agreements as a large contributory factor to regularisation of working conditions, an important asset in the smooth running of production.

We assume that Mr. Hitchcock would want his crew to continue working until the early hours. Subsequently, he would probably grumble at their slowness and tiredness, after a few weeks of working at this pace. If Mr. Hitchcock has any knowledge of the French film industry during the past few years he will know that under a 40-hour working week—much less than we actually work in this country—the industry has made considerable progress. A leading French director, for example, told us only a short while ago that whilst he had originally been opposed to the proposals he now welcomes them whole-heartedly as the fitness and mental keenness of his crews resultant upon the shorter working week actually results in quicker work and moreover greatly enhanced quality of production. The fact that there are four French films showing in the West End to-day supports this argument.

Perhaps Mr. Hitchcock will think again. In his own interests, if not in those of his crew.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE H. ELVIN,
General Secretary, A.C.T.

'The Challenge'—continued

architect's eye for the drama of heeling precipice and giddy *abseil*. Even the members of the Alpine Club may look at it and approve; and the simple folk who climb on the hills of the Lakes and North Wales, and stand small chance of getting to expensive Zermatt, will look at it and feel themselves partners in a noble sport.

'LATE NEWS SUMMARY'

B.B.C News Bulletins are not good enough is Radio Critic George Audit's contention.

MORE people switch their radio sets on at six o'clock, especially on Saturdays, for the First News Bulletin than for any other item. It is estimated that fifteen millions, or nearly half the listening public, are tuned in to the average News. Altogether 1 hr. 45 mins. of the day's programme time is taken up by news announcements.

The Bulletins themselves, as everybody knows, are bare statements of the day's events. The four important News Agencies are quoted as sources at the beginning of each Bulletin. They contain no message straight from the "front line", no personal reporting, no factual information to support the news items, no recapitulation of the morning's news. It is not generally known that the B.B.C. are under agreement to broadcast only the evening news. The broadcast news service is not therefore continuous, in the sense that it does not take up the story at six o'clock in the evening where it left off the night before. It is only supplementary to the newspapers.

There is a story behind this situation. Ever since 1922 there have been clashes between radio and the Press. The B.B.C. have themselves admitted in their 1928 Handbook that: "Before the British Broadcasting Company was actually formed, the newspapers induced the P.M.G. to agree that the new organisation could distribute news only at their sufferance." The arrangement was that broadcast news must confine itself to what the Press Agencies cared to offer and that no Bulletins were to be broadcast before 7 p.m. This put the handcuffs on the B.B.C., because the News Agencies depend on the Press for their custom and in some cases are owned by the Press.

The B.B.C.'s attitude at the time was indicated by Sir John Reith in September, 1924. He wrote "Vested Press interests did succeed in placing certain limitations on its activities *for an initial period* (my italics) and it rests with us now so to handle the growing problems of the business that, consistent with the maintenance of *friendly* (my italics) relationships with the Press, additional news facilities be given as time proceeds. I expect the day will come when, for those who wish it, in home or office, the news of the world may be received direct from the mouth of the radio reporter in any quarter of the globe."

But during the following years the B.B.C. found it difficult enough to keep a nodding acquaintance with the Press without attempting any extension of its news service. The Press lords were, and still are, scared of the B.B.C. They showed in a hundred ways their resentment of its swelling "circulation" and its authority in emergencies.

The newspaper proprietors decided not to publish broadcast programmes except as paid advertisements. But like most "ring" decisions the boycott was soon broken. The pressure of the news value in the programmes got too great, and as soon as *Reynolds News* and an evening paper started publishing them the rest soon followed.

When the contract with the News Agencies expired at the end of 1926, there was further pressure from both sides, and as a result the B.B.C. got permission to broadcast running narratives on sporting events and a slight concession in the time of the First News Bulletin, at 6.30 instead of 7 p.m. Their latest time was fixed at 2 a.m. Writing in their Handbook in 1927 the B.B.C. said, "It was clearly understood on both sides that a new agreement with more latitude would be sought for 1928".

But by 1929 the earliest time had only been pushed forward to 6.15 p.m., and the B.B.C. had to record that "The general attitude of the Press to broadcasting has fluctuated between definite hostility and mere watchfulness".

In the succeeding eight years the First News has only been pushed forward another quarter of an hour, to 6 p.m. The four Agencies, Reuter, P.A., Exchange and Central News provide the B.B.C. with a specially written summary of the day's news. To supplement this information where necessary the B.B.C. have installed ordinary tape machines. It is known that a secret financial agreement exists between the parties but its exact terms have never been made public either by the Press or by the B.B.C. Mr. Sydney Moseley has stated that the B.B.C. pay the four agencies over £15,000 per year. As most of this must be considered compensation money for broadcasting the news fifteen minutes earlier, it can be estimated how highly the Press proprietors value their monopoly of news.

With the circulation of a Sunday newspaper and an advertising revenue of £480,527 a year, the B.B.C.'s journal, *Radio Times*, is constantly embittering Fleet Street opinion. I would like to think that the B.B.C. are pressing as strongly for an extension of the scope and times of their news service as they are for the extension of their publishing profits.

These limitations imposed on the B.B.C. by the Press are so severe that it would be foolish to look upon them as permanent. As a matter of interest I do not believe that newspaper circulations would suffer in the slightest if the B.B.C. took to broadcasting a breakfast News Bulletin. Even the Government's Broadcasting Committee of 1936 admitted that "it is possible that at some future date News Bulletins may be wanted at times when they are not now given. Television, for example, must be free from restrictions as to hours."

The compass needle of policy in broadcast news is bound to be strongly affected by the magnetic influence of Whitehall. Remember that the Corporation are legally the eight individuals who are appointed as Governors by the Crown on the Prime Minister's recommendation. The new Charter actually states that "any Department of H.M. Government may send from all or any of the Broadcasting Stations any announcement or other matter which such Department may require to be broadcast". Most of the present news is supplied by Reuter's Agency, which is independent of financial or other control by Parliament, but does not go out of its way to offend the Government of to-day.

Morning and mid-day News Bulletins must come. But there must also be a complete change of method. The B.B.C. must have their own correspondents in foreign capitals. They have always put up financial objections to previous suggestions for such a scheme. But with an improving financial position it would not break them to employ a dozen regular reporters in European news zones. They already have representatives in Geneva and the U.S.A. Spoken reports should be recorded every day for broadcasting. The B.B.C. should also insist on having a seat in the Press gallery of Parliament.

An illustration of what can be done is provided by the Columbia network's coverage of Hitler's march into Austria. (See the extract in the May–June *World Film News*.)

Compared with that effort the British radio public's view of world affairs is rather like the small boy's impression of a football match from the wrong side of a six-foot fence.

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FILMOSOUND 138F is contained in a single case, which also accommodates 1,600 feet of reel film. In use the combined projector and amplifier unit is removed from the case, and the cover serves as baffle or self-contained loud speaker. New sound-head for the reproducer, incorporating a rotating sound drum, flywheel and a floating idler. Voltages on exciter lamp and photocell balance automatically as volume control is changed. Amplifier tubes of new metal type. Among special features worthy of note are reverse and "still" picture device, motor rewind and reel arm which can be attached quickly with single screw. The projector finish is grey damaskene, while the carrying case is covered grey fabricoid to match. Model 138F, with 750 watt lamp, two film speeds (for either sound or silent film) **Reduced to £117.**

FILMOSOUND 120J, a 750 watt Filmosound that has everything required by the busy travelling sales representative, teachers, lecturers, etc. There is a still picture clutch and reverse gear. It has two speeds so that both sound and silent film can be shown. The improved amplifier provides 25 watts of undistorted output with even greater fidelity than before. Take-up mechanism and cleverly designed to require no changing of belts to run reels of various sizes. **Now reduced to £195**

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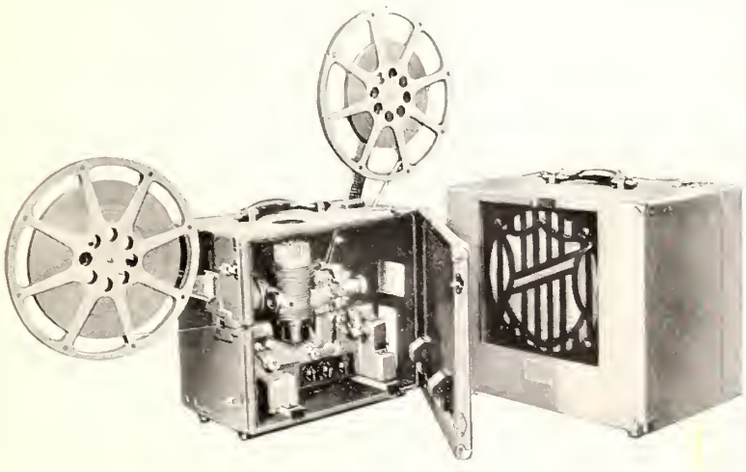

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WORLD FILM NEWS

AUGUST 1938

Vol. 3 No. 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Still: Warner Baxter and Freddie Bartholomew in *Kidnapped*

Alexander's Rag-time Band: by *Stan Patchett* 144, 145

"I Would Like To Tell The Truth," Interview with Clifford Odets: by *Leslie Perkoff* 146, 147

Star Law: by *Russell Ferguson* 148, 149

Grandma's Boy: the comedies of Harold Lloyd: by *Arthur Elton* 150, 151

A Whaler Goes Down: by *Robert Flaherty* 152, 153

Oil from the Earth: by *William Farr* 154, 155

The Sheik Rides Again; the return of Rudolph Valentino . . 156, 157

A Night at the Movies: by *Robert Benchley* 158, 159

One Third of a Nation: a "Living Newspaper" extract 160, 161, 162, 163

European Storm Centre: "The March of Time" on Czechoslovakia 164, 165

Time and the Cowboys: by *Thomas Baird* 166, 167, 169

Films Reviewed: by *Basil Wright* and *Marion Fraser* . . . 170, 171

Review of Reviews: edited by *H. E. Blyth* . . 172, 173, 174, 175, 177

Movie Theatre Management, by *Basil Clavering* 179

Edinburgh Film Festival: by *Norman Wilson* 179

The Month's Releases 181

Cockalorum 182, 183

Robert Wiene: by *Kraszna-Krausz* 185

Film Guide 186, 187

Culture Films under the Nazis 187

Television: by *Thomas Baird* 188

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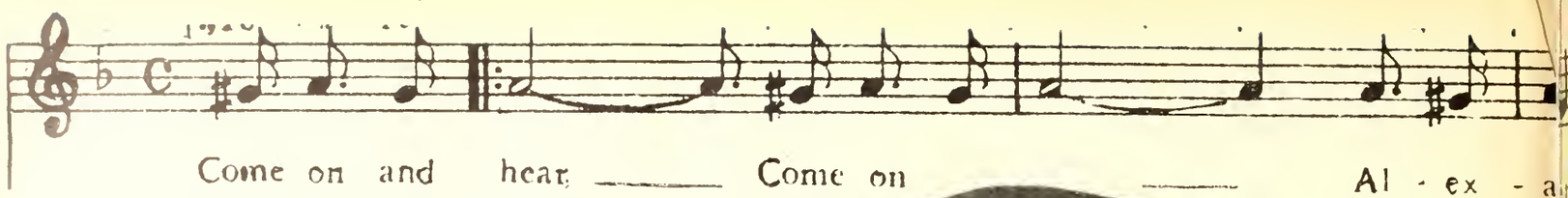


LEANING back in the plush glory of the new Twentieth Century-Fox projection room, vainly trying to keep my wandering thoughts focused on the newest Twentieth Century-Fox epic (I quote from the 24-sheeter) *Alexander's Rag-time Band*, I was reminded of the time when I was a fight manager—with a tearaway welterweight under my wing who could lick his weight in wildcats, as long as the other guy didn't tag him first.

Tony, a local boy who never quite made good, was punch shy. When he first stepped up from the amateurs he knocked all his opponents colder than a Coca Cola, then some gorilla beat him to the punch, and the memory of that shellacking haunted him for the rest of his fighting days.

Of course, there are stout hearts who beat the jabbing jinx—Joe Louis for instance.

When Max Schmeling battered young black Joe into bleeding pulp that surprising June night in 1936, Duke Ellington was moved to write a song about it called, "It Was a Sad Night in Harlem," and the wise men of Broadway shook their bald heads and muttered through their ten-cent cigars: "He'll never be the same again".

They were wrong; wise guys generally are. Last month the two leather pushers clashed again and before you could say Adolf Hitler grim-faced Joe Louis had the pride of the Nazis draped blearily over the top rope.

Hollywood has always been punch shy when it comes to handling the jazz idiom in its celluloid masterpieces, either as a background or as the featured attraction.

Fritz Lang, a lad with plenty of the old moxie, seemed to be getting somewhere in his opening department store sequence in *You and Me*, but he slipped back into the old routine before the picture was through and things were as you were again.

Somewhere along the crazy Hollywood line, *Alexander's Rag-time Band* started out as a crack Twentieth Century Limited flier—a history of jazz from ragtime to swing—but long before the journey was over it slowed down into just another musical.

The story is the good old "Boy Meets Girl" formula, with everything going its well-worn way, even to the Big Misunderstanding sequence when The Boy (Tyrone Power) nearly, but not quite, marries the hard-boiled, but understanding torch singer (Ethel Merman) because he hasn't heard that The Girl (Alice Faye) has been divorced by the Big Hearted Friend (Don Ameche) who faded gracefully out of the picture when he realised suddenly that she had married him in an effort to forget The Boy.

Alexander's Rag-time Band takes nearly two hours to show and contains thirty of the songs which Irving Berlin has written during the last twenty-seven years.

Irving Berlin

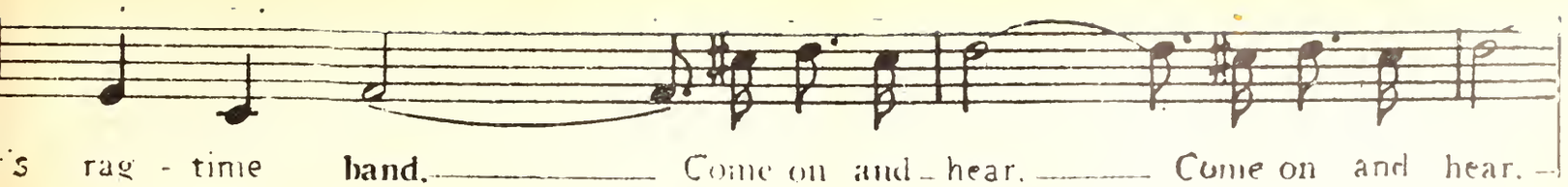
ALEXANDER'S RAG-TIME BAND

Discordant Notes by Stan Patchett

Most of the background music is of the symphonic variety and is consequently heavy and lumbering, but in one scene—a speak-easy—Ethel Merman sings a chorus of "Blue Skies" accompanied by a small negro band. It is here just for one fleeting second, that Irving Berlin's immortal music comes to life.

The stuff is there and it's mellow, but it revives no memories of tunes that made famous such great entertainers as Al Jolson, George Jessel, Gene Austin (his record of "Blue Skies" sold over a million platters), Eddie Cantor and Ruth Etting, mainly because most film stars lack that God given gift of really selling a number.

Alice Faye used to sing with Rudy Vallee,



and she's still just another girl in a band who might have learnt something about phrasing a song if she'd studied such great jazz artists as Mildred Bailey, Billie Holiday and Ivie Anderson.

Ethel Merman, who is featured in the more torrid Berlin numbers, done up to date in the worst pseudo swing manner, is just another hotcha singer with a good pair of gams, but legs, no matter how shapely, don't send you away whistling tunes.

Somehow or other you can't help drawing comparisons between the story of *Alexander's Rag-time Band* and Dorothy Baker's "Young Man with a Horn",* the first novel inspired by the life of a famous swing musician—the late Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke, a trumpet player with Paul Whiteman.

There are two sides to jazz—Negro and Jewish—one extemporisation or swing, the other sweetly sentimental, with a catch in the throat like the despairing cry of a Cantor.

Little Jewish boy, Irving Berlin, with a passionate belief in the music he wrote, relied as much on the story his lyric told as the mood his melodies created.

Living in Chicago as a boy, Bix Beiderbecke haunted the river boats that paddled all the way from New Orleans up the Mississippi, drinking in the pure jazz played by the negro bands on the boats, bands that featured such great jazz names as Fate Marable, King Oliver and Louis Armstrong.

Jazz, as Bix played it, was improvised, unwritten and spontaneous.

The story of Rick Martin, the hero of "Young Man with a Horn", is the story of many a swing man. Meeting up with a bunch of negro musicians, Rick learns that the rattle of the tunes turned out like sausages by Tin Pan Alley could be turned into a swelling, soul satisfying symphony when they were ad libbed.

Rick turns from the piano to the cornet—just as Bix did—"because it's nearer the head". He quickly smashes his way to the top and is soon featured with a name band. Then he marries a girl who tries to find out what makes him like he is, with the result that Rick turns to drink for the understanding and companionship he hungers for. He dies, right back where he started, clutching at his handful of stars.

In her introduction to her book, Dorothy Baker frankly confesses that the job of interpreting the life and death of a swing musician was too much for her. "One of these days even his records will be played out", she says, but such is not the case with *Alexander's Rag-time Band*. Admitted it could never be a "Young Man with a Horn", but if Kathryn Scola and Lamar Trotto, who wrote it, had concentrated on the story behind the writing of Irving Berlin's music—it's a fact that numbers like "All Alone", "You Forgot to Remember" and "Blue Skies" represent milestones of emotion in Irving Berlin's life, then we might have had something.

Consider a brief synopsis of Irving Berlin's real life story.

Born Israel Baline in Temmen, Russia, he was the son of a rabbi, who moved his family to America and settled in New York's overpopulated East Side when Irving was four years old.

When he was six, the dark eyed little boy was intoning the sad and sacred songs of his race in the choir at his father's synagogue.

His father died when he was twelve and he was forced to sell newspapers and sing in honky tonks to make a living.

His singing was as bad then as it is now, but with the aid of a set of coloured slides (remember?) his illustrated heart-aches brought him in fifty cents a night.

At fourteen he was a singing waiter—wrestling with plates at notorious "Nigger Mike's" in Chinatown. It was there he wrote his first song, "Marie From Sunny Italy". It failed to set Broadway afire, selling only a few copies.

Undiscouraged, he continued to plug away at song writing, finally hitting the ball with a whacky tune called "My Wife's Gone to the Country", which swept America.

In 1911, the world stopped cake walking and bunny hugging to start jigging to "Alexander's Rag-time Band". Irving Berlin had turned rag-time into jazz.

Two women brought happiness and sorrow into Berlin's life.

In February of 1913 he married Dorothy Goetz, a childhood sweetheart. She died in July of that same year.

Twelve years later, after a stormy courtship, he married Ellin Mackay, daughter of the cable magnate.

Socialite Ellin was dropped from the Social Register, but it must have been worth it because Mr. and Mrs. Irving Berlin are about the happiest couple in show business to-day.

I repeat, had Irving Berlin's life been used as a basis for *Alexander's Rag-time Band* we might have had something, but I still doubt if life could have been breathed into a cast of such stereotyped actors. Tyrone Power is a nice looking boy, but he's no Irving Berlin by any stretch of imagination.

Sad to relate, that ole debbil swing has been thrust into *Alexander's Rag-time Band*. After the War is over (when heroes come back with a limp and a habit) our hero, who has taken the name of Alexander's Rag-time Band—sort of cute that—stages a *Swing Concert* at Carnegie Hall, complete with a ballet and a band of such unwieldy proportions, the like of which has never been seen or heard since the days of once portly Paul Whiteman and his "Concert" orchestra.

As sure as you're bored this sequence was added to the film following the sensational success of killer-diller Benny Goodman and his cats at the self same Carnegie Hall. It's too bad the boys in the back room at Hollywood didn't check up and find out just what a swing concert looked and sounded like, and how many men there were in the band.

Perhaps it's just as well after all, for, as Fats Waller put it to the anxious alligator who wanted to know just what swing was:

"Lady, if you have to ask questions about it, then jes' don't mess around with it!"

The original Dixie Band (*Courtesy "The Melody Maker"*)

*Gollancz (7s. 6d.)

'I WOULD LIKE TO TELL THE TRUTH'

CLIFFORD ODETS, stage and screen writer, talks to Leslie Perkoff

Clifford Odets (*Talbot*)

IT depends on one's standpoint, one's *weltanschauung* so to speak, as to how a man like Clifford Odets is to be assessed, discussed and treated. To those people with a partiality for day-dreaming and suffering from a success-neurosis, who read about an individual's progress to fame, thinking, "Ah, if this were only me," and then taking on the hallucination that it might be them, the story of Odets' career might offer thrilling material.

Starting out with the intention of becoming a musician, Odets ultimately moved in front of the footlights with touring stock-companies, and in that sphere as an actor succeeded in penetrating the New York Group Theatre Company. Then this young man who saw eye-to-eye with the stage, dared to show the very able and glib American dramatists a thing or two about writing plays charged with some living truths. His play *Waiting for Lefty*, with its analysis of U.S.A. trade union conditions, had an almost hypnotic effect on the preconceived tastes of theatre-goers. It was real, it was alive; moreover, the common everyday speech in it had a peculiar poetic flavour. Propagandist, no doubt, but it was also first-rate theatre and entertainment. ("Good art can make money," Odets says.) Even certain people to whom social truths are anathema, were impressed when they saw the Unity Theatre production of *Waiting for Lefty* in England, if not for its content, then for its powerful idiom and treatment of real characters.

Odets moved on, wrote more plays, became recognised as one of America's most powerful dramatists, went to Hollywood as a scenarist, wrote the scripts of *The General Died at Dawn*, and other films.

There are people, of course, who see in each public figure a different sort of identification; these are the incorrigible "romantics," the disappointed and loveless perhaps who are fed with rumours and scandal. They have seen in Odets a different sort of celebrity: the husband of a world-famous screen actress with trouble brewing on the domestic front. (It could only have been deplored in certain circles that some of the first questions that were fired at Odets on setting foot in England were about his private life.)

Luckily there are others whose interest in Odets is dictated to by different reasons; people who see in him someone who reflects the contemporary scene like a portent and who has discharged the rich and troubled idiom of reality into the modern drama. In many European countries, the modern creative drama is a still-born proposition; only the classics are given first place where it is dangerous and often seditious to discuss the present. Here, too, in England the tempo of the modern drama is unhappily sluggish. We have a Bridie, true. But where are the dramatists who might carry on in the spirit of a Shaw? And where are more plays that might come from the pen of a Sean O'Casey?

Rather tritely expressed, Odets comes as a breath of fresh air on to the English-speaking stage, and at the age of thirty-two already deserves to be listened to and watched. And

soliciting his views on the cinema, he can only confirm the belief of those who recognise the dead-end restricting its development.

"I wrote the first two scripts for the film *Blockade*," he says. "They kept changing it about, and when I saw the film, I couldn't find one line left of what I'd written. I don't turn to the cinema as an artist; it's not a question of art at all. With Hollywood it's all a matter of business and making money. And I've got this feeling about Hollywood: they've got a magnificent equipment going on there, a marvellous, awe-inspiring set-up. Yet it labours and labours and brings out nothing but mice. I've never sat through a film, y' know, without thinking to myself, 'That's not true. It's a lie'."

A *Daily Express* theatre reporter, John Grime, has said about Odets' play, *Golden Boy*, and its central character, Joe Bonaparte, "Of Joe, these characters and the rest in the play it is possible to say, as it is of the story itself, 'That's right. Yes, it is so'."

This comment seems to tally with Odets' position as an artist and the desire to mirror truthful human relationships. Thus the cinema as it is to-day cannot claim him, though he might say about it, "It's a great form. Why, it's almost presumptuous of me to say so, I'd even rather go to the pictures than the theatre. Films are more entertaining. But I don't pay any attention to the stories. I just love to watch the camera moving about."

IT is known that a good deal of modern fiction, reportage and even poetry have been influenced by the cinema. Has he not been aware of this influence in the work of some modern writers?

Odets is not sure about this. He mentions the name Otis Ferguson as one of America's most brilliant writers on films and seems to miss the point of the argument, but questioned as to whether his own plays have been influenced by the cinema, says, "In my last play, for instance, the form comes from Shakespeare," and about *Waiting for Lefty* adds, "It may be cinematic, but its basic pattern certainly comes from the old negro minstrel show."

I think of the "Pantheon" of stars, many of whom can be termed louts and Runyonesque dolls. I also think of the profound hypnotic effect these very human stars have on the general public who identify themselves with them. Maybe I am biased, and often prefer Donald Duck to the Dietrichs and the Clark Gables. I put the problem of the star-system to Odets, who is able to say, "All people tend to shirk responsibility and don't delve deeply into human relationships. The movie-clichés with their superb polish help them to forget their own valuable experience and furnish them with ready-made patterns of behaviour. That's where the stars and the cinema have a harmful effect. That's also where Hollywood is really amoral."

"The General Died at Dawn." Scripted by Odets

And returning to matters filmic in between "off the racket" observations and cross-questions, Odets ventures to say something about the people who gravitate to the film Mecca. "It's funny, but in the past they killed 'em with starvation. Now they kill 'em with too much money. They die of too good foods and a surplus of recognition. Every type of writer and musician comes to Hollywood. The finest in the world. My God, I even walked into Stravinsky there. But these people are not permitted to do the things they want to do. Their talents are not used. There's that whole business about making watertight plots about things always on the superficial level. It's impossible. Writing and directing can only come out of your own feeling, and an artist can only create what he himself has experienced."

And if he were permitted to do the work that he wanted to do in films?

"I would like to make films about quite ordinary and simple things and people, to produce that emotional level that is lacking. I would like to tell the truth. Take the human relationship that exists between just a man and a woman. That's never been done truthfully. No. Every great theme that's handled is besmirched, devitalised and dehumanised. To think of all the great material that Hollywood has degraded! They've certainly got a great nose there for finding great material, but they finish up by making it worthless. A great organ like the cinema has no sense of public responsibility."

Further, Odets asserts pointedly that all this superficial level and waste can only be "the fruits of a business culture." And to the question, "What shall be done?" shrugs his shoulders, grins and says, "If a soap-manufacturer gives you a brand of soap, you either use it or don't."

Presumably implying powerful social factors, Odets asserts finally, "There's no art, no plays, nothing, so long as the artist doesn't get his strength from the masses. Without that, it ain' gonner be."

Certainly there can never be a real and vital theatre and cinema without the support of those millions whose senses are often dulled and blunted by our purveyors of popular "culture." But perhaps in America there are factors at work designed to produce the antithesis of this incredible hokum. In England there may be young men like Auden and Isherwood, important for what they have done and might do, yet left out in the cold because of their introspection and insufficiency of their environment. It requires an Odets, however, to draw on the rich and necessary material from those very millions whose lives speak a language foreign to that of the extraordinary sophists and more feasible drawing-room types. That there are many among the broader mass of people who still go on aping these types and repress what is most native to their own emotional make-up, the nature of the present-day cinema is partially to blame.

One must also not forget the rôle of the "soap-manufacturers" whose publicity departments still go on prattling about their "wonderful" and "stupendous" offerings: neither can one hoodwink oneself into believing that Hollywood is the only centre of their activities.

STAR LAW

You can't be a movie star if you behave like Hugh Herbert, Johnny Arthur, Edgar Kennedy, or Clarence Wilson, says RUSSELL FERGUSON

WHEN Edgar Kennedy said the other day "I guess I'm one of those guys who never let himself get too big", he surely did not mean that he could have been a star if he had wanted to. Or if he did, he was very much mistaken.

A star is good looking.

Edgar Kennedy is not. It's no use telling us that there are good looks and good looks, or indulging in any sort of quibble. In the movies there is only one kind of good looks. Clive Brook, Robert Taylor, George Raft and a lot of other actors have them, and Edgar Kennedy has not, and that's all there is about it.

Nor is it any use saying, as Leslie Henson says, "My features have a certain rugged grandeur". No doubt they have, but rugged grandeur is not glamour. Let us try the words over to see how they sound. The glamorous Leslie Henson. The glamorous Edgar Kennedy. No, it will not do.

And leaving aside his figure, which is terrible, think of his temper. His temper is so bad that it has given a word to the language. When your little boy comes home from school, and you ask him "How did the teacher like your exercise?" he is as likely as not to reply "He did an Edgar Kennedy". At once you understand that the teacher tried for a bit to master himself and then put on a floor show.

Actors who have any ambitions in the direction of the stellar income groups should not behave like this.

A star has everything under control, even if he is in handcuffs. He just passes a crack to the bulls, off-hand in America, evenly through clenched teeth, in England. You may remember Cary Grant in a South American jail. A beautiful lady came to see him and said "How did you get in here?" and he just said "Influence".

A star smiles and whistles in the face of all difficulties.

Edgar Kennedy is not the only actor whose temper has kept him in the bit parts. Consider Clarence Wilson. You have seen him hopping mad any time these last twenty years. Everything seems to happen to *him*. His daughters marry all the wrong men. His office is always full of Everett Hortons and Frank McHughs and Warren Hymers. If there are trains to be lost, he loses them. If water is squirted anywhere, it goes in his face.

This kind of treatment has not improved his manners, which were bad enough to begin with. When a man has seen upwards of five hundred daughters married against his will, he is apt to become ill-tempered and to give up even pretending to be nice. Nowadays Clarence Wilson forecloses right and left, and serves writs on everybody he can think of. It was no surprise that he was so short with Paul Muni in *Emile Zola*. As soon as we saw his face we knew he was going to be mean.

He may be soured also by the misfortune, which he shares with such people as Arthur Hoyt and Donald Meek, of never having been young.

A star is young.

Clarence Wilson is not. He never was. His parents did not even do that for him. If you were to turn up his birth in the newspapers you would probably read "To Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Senr., a son, aged 55, both well".

JOHNNY ARTHUR is mean, too, but in a different way. Strangely enough, he has never been old, but it has not helped him any. He is one of those men who can't take it, whatever it is. In hundreds of films we have seen him behave in the same way. The trouble with him is just plain, cowardly meanness. He runs away at a threat, falls down at a blow, and rats in every tight corner. Whatever he does, he never takes the consequences like a man. He bubbles and cries.

A star is brave.

Does Spencer Tracy bubble and cry? No. Does Jack Holt. No. It's no use saying that Clark Gable cried in *San Francisco*, or that Colin Clive cried in *Journey's End*. These were strong men in their agony, not contemptible little squirts.

But Johnny Arthur is in the habit of it now, and that's why no girl will ever place his photo under her pillow. The very idea of it is ludicrous, like Johnny Arthur himself.

It seems also that there are other young men going the same way. Did you see Robert Newton's atrocious behaviour in *Farewell Again*? He very nearly went off his head with jealousy and forgot all about his King and country.

A star honours his King and country.

Did Leslie Banks allow Flora Robson's illness to come between him and his duty? No. Did he give way to his feelings? No. Does he ever? No. This is the inner gallantry to which the Johnny Arthurs and the Robert Newtons of this world can never hope to aspire.

It looks easy enough when Leslie Banks does it, just twisting up his face a little and going slowly up the gangway, in some films to his duty, in others to his doom. But it is only certain people who can do it his particular way, and that is one reason why stars get big salaries.

INCOMPETENCE, of course, is absolutely fatal. In this department the policemen are easily the worst, and always have been. So far as one can remember at this late date, the Keystone Cops never caught anybody.

For the matter of that, the policeman in Punch and Judy is as stupid as any of them. At the present moment he is managing to get himself publicly hanged every half-hour on every beach in Britain.

Consider this gentleman. His name is Robert Emmett O'Connor. He is one of those who has ruined his chances of stardom (if he ever had any) by becoming a policeman. You will remember him in *A Night at the Opera*. The poor fellow was given the job of catching Harpo.

A star gets his man.

But the moment we saw Robert Emmett O'Connor, we knew he was a policeman and that anybody he caught was sure to get away again. And so it was. Groucho just said, "I'll handle this", and he did.

On opposite page: Hugh Herbert. Above: Clarence Wilson, Reginald Owen, James Gleason, Lynne Overman, Edgar Kennedy. Right: Johnny Arthur, Robert Newton, Edgar Kennedy.

By way of further illustration, here is Fred Kelsey. He is usually to be found arresting the wrong man, going in by the wrong door, following the wrong car. One would expect as much from a policeman.

A star is not a policeman (corollary of "A star gets his man").

Even in the heyday of the crime wave, it was a very rare thing for the policeman to solve the crime or kill the gangster. Some newspaperman solved the crime and some other gangster killed the gangster. Or else the gangster gave his life for something. In any case it was as much as the police could do to get there with the wagon before *rigor mortis* set in.

There are many reasons why a star is not a policeman, some of them very deep-seated. Perhaps the simplest is that the uniform is not attractive, and there is a fairly strict law which says that a star wears an attractive uniform or none at all.

FINALLY, anybody who is habitually laughed at has no hope of ever being a star.

A star is not mocked. A star is no laughing matter.

It is true that in such films as the Powell-Loy group the stars have looked pretty foolish at times, but this departure is to be regarded as a passing phase and, as the critics keep pointing out, is a breach of Star Law.

A star is always at the right end of the garden-syringe. The joke is on the other man.

This particular law rules out all the comics straight away, though most of them were never in the hunt. The plain damn fools are always being laughed at, Claude Hulbert and Claude Dampier and Claude Allister and William Claude Fields and all the other Claudes except Rains (Rains took a big chance on his Christian name).

Consider Eugene Pallette. He has tried his hand at nearly everything and made a complete hash of it. In his very first film, or near it, he was a detective, and from the very beginning it was clear that he could not detect a bad smell.

And Hugh Herbert. Pretty nearly his first film showed that his film career was to be a series of hopeless bungles, and that he would never figure with a woman in a fade-out.

In this film he was a work-shy, know-all sort of man, always wanting to show everybody how things should be done. Everything he touched went to pieces. It is true that when he had balled up pretty nearly everybody's life, and was looking down in the mouth, his wife put her arms round him and kissed him and said she loved him in spite of it all.

But she was middle-aged.

So anyone who wants to be a star must be young and good looking, and stay young and good looking till he dies of old age.

He must be smart, which means that he knows all the answers, runs the fastest, jumps the highest, catches everybody, nobody catches him, makes the grade, flies the Atlantic, swims the Channel, breaks the bank and gets the girl.

These gentlemen are not up to it, so they are not stars. We fob them off with a few hundred and keep the real money for them that keep the Star Law.

It's no use saying that you like them, or that they're the life and soul of the movies, or that they're nice even if they're not handsome, or that they're the best actors of the lot. It's no use handing out stuff about human and true to life. Human and true to life has nothing to do with it. And it's no use saying that Hugh Herbert is a beautiful man and you love him. He is not a beautiful man and you do not love him, and if you say you do, it's only a manner of speaking. Young man, would you like to be like Hugh Herbert? Young woman, would you marry him if he were?

Come now. Think of Clark Gable. Think of Robert Taylor. Think of Franchot Tone and Gary Cooper.

Love Hugh Herbert, indeed.

GRANDMA'S BOY

If I can't be funny and clean, —why, I'll just be clean, he decided many years back. ARTHUR ELTON *argues that he has been funny as well, and, in case you don't know, tells you why and how.*

Top right : "Never Weaken." Above : "Safety Last."

WHEN I was a small boy I went to a children's party. There was a little girl there who wore spectacles. I asked the lady who gave the party to introduce me, giving as a reason that the little girl was like Harold Lloyd. The lady thought I was a horrid small boy. But it goes to show that even seventeen years ago Harold Lloyd had a powerful hold on my imagination. I think I remember seeing his films before Chaplin's. I liked them then ; I like them still. But he does not bear the identification marks that most other talented comedians carry.

He is a very competent actor, but not a great actor like Keaton. He is a good acrobat, but not a master of physical action like Chaplin. He is plain, but he does not look funny like Groucho Marx. He is one of the only screen stars, I feel sure, who could stand outside a cinema in London showing his latest film without being recognised by a fan. Indeed, I doubt if he has any fans. He has no trace of sex appeal.

Yet, Harold Lloyd is very funny, and I think getting funnier. But it is difficult to say why. Here is a plain looking man, without an attractive screen personality. He is athletic, but not outstandingly so. He just goes along. Things happen to him, and then more things happen, mostly unpleasant. And it turns out all right in the end. Just flat like that.

In fact, Lloyd brings to the screen a minimum of personality, a minimum of wit, a minimum of critical sense towards his environment (he just accepts it). He is a sort of Aunt Sally for the slings and arrows of fortune. And here, I think, lies the reason for his success.

There is a great deal of the old-fashioned gentleman about Harold Lloyd. He is so earnest about his work, so balanced, so without complexes. He has all the old-fashioned reverences. Mother, country, religion—all the institutions so often exposed to the critical analysis are accepted by him.

"I can't understand how any man could ever dissect his own mother's character," he once said. "After all—whatever she does, whatever her faults—she is your mother."

He is clean. One day one of his advisers came to him and said, "I've got it, Speed, a bit of business that will go over big!"

When he heard what it was Lloyd retorted, "Not on your life! If I can't be funny and clean—why, then I'll decide to be just clean."

When just a youngster out of high school Lloyd came to Hollywood to get into motion-pictures. Every studio to which he applied turned him down. He was determined to go ahead. Noticing that anybody who was in costume could get into a studio, Lloyd decided that there was nothing obligatory about ordinary clothes. So he got himself a costume, and from that time he has stayed on the inside.

While working as an extra in one of the studios he met another young extra named Hal Roach. After some time the two of them, with only a few hundred dollars between them, decided to go into business for themselves.

"I wasn't any meteor, I can tell you that!" comments Harold Lloyd about those early days. "But we did succeed in selling a few pictures the first year. The next we sold more. Still, that didn't seem to get me much nearer to the silk shirt. We were terribly poor in those days. We put every cent we made back into our pictures."

The first film that made Lloyd famous was a short. I forget the name. He was on top of a high building. He wanted to commit suicide. However much he tried he never succeeded. This film could have got by on situation value alone. All the logic of comedy was implicit in the situation. Lloyd had had a brilliant idea, and it did not need a great comedian to carry it out. Indeed, Lloyd was so pleased with the situation that he has repeated it at least twice, once in the famous silent film, *Safety Last*, and once in the more recent talkie, *Welcome Danger*. But the comic logic of the unfulfilled suicide is absent in the later efforts.

This is not to suggest that Harold Lloyd's early comedies were successful simply because he used novel or strange situations. The successes of *Sailormade Man*, *Grandma's Boy* and *Girl Shy* bear witness to the contrary. No, I believe that Lloyd decided, since he had not got a great comic personality in the sense that Keaton, Chaplin and the others had, to manufacture comedy without any of the usual equipment of the comedian—personality, intellect or wit. One imagines that he must have said to himself, "What is funny?" and answered, "A man falling down on a banana skin and hurting himself." From this he must have developed a theory. Anything is funny (*a*) when you are in a ridiculous difficulty and may hurt yourself, (*b*) when you are hurt unexpectedly, (*c*) when you are prevented from doing something you want to. The logical outcome of this is that it is not the central figure that makes the fun, but the environment. Almost all other comedians have produced comedy by the interaction between environment and a highly characterised personality; the environment may or may not be ordinary, the comedian is always extraordinary.

Given these things, another principle follows. Though it may be true that a man slipping upon a banana skin is funny, one cannot build a film on this episode alone. The principle holds, but the detail must vary. So we early find Harold Lloyd using armies of gagmen to create the banana skin episodes. His films depend on one banana skin after another, so to speak, yet one must not interfere with the environment. It would be fatal to the comedy if the banana skins were anything more than accidental litter on the pavement. We must be able to say in any given circumstance, "that might have happened to me".

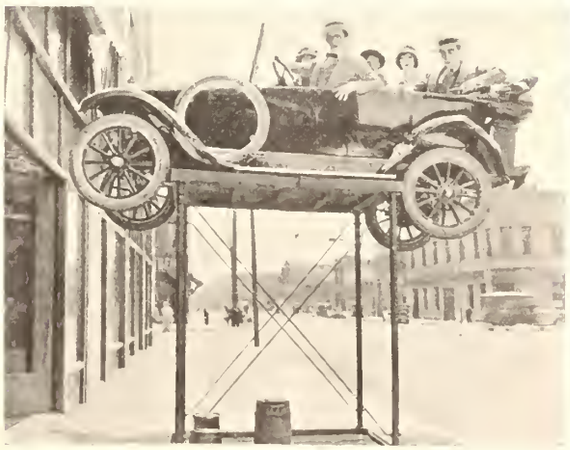
Lloyd's films have always stood alone in their sense of craftsmanship, in their splendid sense of continuity, in their sense of shape (often elementary, but very clear and definite). This super attention to detail of craftmanship must have been forced on Lloyd the moment he began to manufacture fun instead of applying the creative inspiration of genius. Look at any Chaplin film. The internal construction of a sequence is often brilliant, but the shape of the whole film and the standard of craftsmanship is often poor. The film stands or falls by Chaplin himself. Not so Lloyd.

There are disadvantages in the cold-blooded manufacture of comedy. It is easy to build the skeleton, hard to drape it with a solid body. This is only too true of Harold Lloyd. After the first fine silent efforts, *Safety Last*, *Sailormade Man*, *For Heaven's Sake* the joints began to creak, till, when one reached *College Days*, the fun was almost lost in the pain and hurts Lloyd received.

But Harold Lloyd managed to redrape his skeleton and survive. Few comedians change once they have found their form. Chaplin is obviously interested only in perpetuating the Chaplin film as we knew it ten years ago. Keaton, baffled by sound, disappeared from the screen. So did Langdon. Harold Lloyd and Stan Laurel managed almost alone among comedians to bridge the gap from silence to sound. (Stan Laurel has been making comedies by himself ever since I can remember; Hardy only joined him just before talkies started.) Harold Lloyd has not only survived, he has flowered into something new with the advent of talkies. That is one of the advantages of making something by machine; you can change the style of your goods to suit the market. You need not be bothered by artistic temperament. So Harold Lloyd has given himself a new character. It is machine-made like all the other things about his films, but none the less efficient for that. He has developed a bashfulness, since the days of *Girl Shy*, till it fits him like a glove. To-day, he has honour and chivalry which he never had before.

His most recent film is *Professor Beware*. Harold Lloyd is at his best. The skeleton of his comedy is there for you to see if you look for it. But it is so well draped that we can almost believe that the waxwork has life. *Professor Beware* is a brilliant achievement of machine-made comedy. And in this case, to make the waxwork even more convincing, it is surrounded by minor characters which are alive and vivid. The two hoboes whom he picks up belong to the finest traditions of personal comedy.

You will be a cynical picture-goer if you can sit through *Professor Beware* and not like it nearly as much as the finest inspired comedy of Laurel and Hardy. Nearly as much, but not quite as much, I hope.



"Why Worry?" a 1923 Pathé Lloyd film. (By kind permission of Studio Ltd., from Paul Rotha's "Movie Parade.")

"Professor Beware" (Paramount).

A WHALER GOES DOWN . .

by

Robert Flaherty

(who made 'Nanook', 'Moana', 'White Shadows', 'Tabu' and 'Elephant Boy')

"Nanook of the North"

LEAVING the tumult of McLeod's swarming post site, I walked along the rocky tide mark. Not far away I came upon a whale-boat drawn up on shore. It was a twenty-five-foot double-ender built of oak. Evidently it was a present from some whaling captain to one of his Eskimo harpooneers. Near by stood three topeks. Sitting before one I saw an old Eskimo who was apparently too feeble to help with the post-building.

"Chimo!" I called to him.

"Good-day, capitan! Good-day, good-day!" was his startling reply.

"What, you speak English?" I exclaimed.

"All good whaler mans him speak English," he said, smiling.

He was a typical whaler Eskimo, a type never seen in Ungava, but found in many places along the coast of Baffin Land—Fair Ness; Frobisher Gulf; the Savage Islands and Cumberland Sound—where for more than a century Scottish and American whalers have recruited Eskimos to supplement their crews. The whalers take aboard not only the Eskimo men, but their families as well. Thus fifteen men, an average whaler's crew, may be complemented by as many as seventy souls. Of course all the Eskimo's hunting impedimenta, his kayaks and sledges and a veritable army of dogs go with him as well. The whaler's cruise may last a year or more before the Eskimo is returned to his own land, and the cruise may range a thousand miles over the northerly arms of the Bay—Rowe's Welcome, the Frozen Strait, Repulse Bay, Fury and Hecla Strait, and the ice-beset Foxe Channel.

"Yes," said the old Eskimo, "my grandfather before me was a whaler and my father too; and myself, I have been a whaler all my days and I am now an old man. My son is a whaler, and there lies his boat." He pointed to the double-ender. "My son is good with his harpoon, and for that did the chief of the last whaler give him this boat."

"Who was that?" I asked.

"It was the Yankee who was lost with all his crew in the sea off Cape Wolstenholme last year."

"What!" I exclaimed. The disaster he referred to must have been the one about which I had heard on my arrival at Wolstenholme, when Bruce and his Eskimos had thought at first that I could be no other than a survivor of the same disaster. "Were you there when it happened?"

"Yes. We were living in the noona which the kablunak calls Frobisher Gulf, when this ship of which I speak came in and took us all aboard. Thirty-five we numbered, with our children, and besides we had our dogs and kayaks and topeks and sledges, and a walrus-skin omiak for our women.

"We started through the straits bound for Rowe's Welcome and Repulse Bay. We had much ice coming through the straits. Sometimes we were going from the north coast to the south coast, and then to the north coast again. Sometimes we were only going back. We were never getting very far through the straits because of all the ice. There were times when for many days we did not move at all, so thick was the ice. Sometimes when the ice showed signs of opening and the kablunak could get the omiak into the lanes of open water, all of us, men, women and children, would be out on the ice with a long rope as thick as my arm, and we would be hauling the omiak and it would be following us, coming very slow.

"It took us nearly two moons to get into the western end of the straits, and then one evening we came very near an island and we wanted to land on this island, for we had seen on it some bear, and we wanted to get some fresh water for the omiak as well.

"The sea had no wind, though it was heaving, and in a small time the darkness would come. Then while we were going the nose of

the omiak struck something. It was a reef, and over this reef the nose of the omiak rose high out of the water. Then the nose stopped rising, and when we looked we could see the red bottom of the omiak. At the stern the deck nearly touched the water.

"The chief of the omiak now spit his words as he always did when he was angry, and he told us to lower our boats and take our women and children and our dogs to the island.

"'We will have to wait for the high tide,' the chief of the omiak said, 'before we can get off, and then in the morning when we get off you can all come on board again.'

"We went to the island and we found driftwood and we made a fire, and there was fish to be caught, and someone killed a seal. We feasted and we looked out at the omiak with its nose so high in the air and its stern so near the water, and its big sticks and its cross-sticks all leaning far over. It was helpless, like a whale when it is stranded.

"The night came, and it was black, for there was no moon. We lay down in the open and soon everyone was asleep, and there were only a few coals still glowing at our fire, and off in the distance there were the small eyes of the omiak shining through the blackness.

"And now while I was beginning to go to sleep I could hear a low moan, and this moan was the wind. I wet my finger with my mouth, and I held it up, and the way the wind was coming was the bad way, for it came right on to where the omiak hung with its nose so high upon that reef. Quick then came an angry wind and it scattered the ashes from the dying fire, and by the time we were on our feet and our eyes were open wide we were in the thick of a wind that was beginning to be a storm.

"We got our kayaks to the water with our women helping and we went out to the omiak, but even now with the heave that was growing in the sea more and more the nose of the omiak was going up and coming down hard upon that reef, and the big sticks and the cross-sticks would shake. 'Look out!' we said to one another. 'The big sticks may fall.'

"Quick the seas grew, and we had to leave or we could not land upon the island. 'Are you not all coming ashore?' we asked the chief of the omiak, but he did not hear us, for with a lantern he was looking over the sides first on one side and then on the other, and on both of these sides there were pieces of wood and splinters of wood at which he looked, and they floated upon the water.

"We got to our island just in time, and even then if our women had not gone to their waists in the water to help, our kayaks would have been broken.

"Soon the seas were running wild and smashing on our island, and out where the omiak was we could hear it going up and going down. The kablunak had put a light on the deck, and by this light we could see all the omiak, and its ropes trembled and its sticks shook, and the omiak rolled in jerks one way and then the other like a man who has much pain, and always it was going up and going down.

"'The tide is rising,' we said to one another, 'but the wind comes the bad way, and only farther up on the rocks can the omiak drive.' And it was so, and we could hear sometimes above the shrieks of the wind the groans of the omiak. 'Truly,' said our women, 'it is dying'.

"And all the time the storm grew, and then the big light the kablunaks had put on deck went out, and now only the small eyes of the omiak could we see through the blackness of that storm.

"And now while we listened to the dying of the omiak we began to hear yells from the kablunaks and they were louder even than the shrieks of the storm, and some of these yells came from the bow and some came from high up in the rigging and some came from the stern. And while we listened and watched through the blackness we saw a flash in the bow and then another in the stern, and soon there were more and more of these flashes from the bow and from the stern, and we could hear them too, for they were guns."

"Do you mean to say they were shooting each other?" I asked.

"Yes," the old man nodded.

"Had there been trouble between the chief kablunak and his crew?"

"Yes," the old man said again, "there was one big man and he was always with the chief of the omiak, and he had big hands when they were closed, and his hair was thick and it was not straight, but curled. Pretty hair, our women called it. And in his ears were round yellow rings, and his nose was more funny still, so long it was the end of it almost touched his beard. He was all teeth when he smiled, but when he was angry he was then all teeth too. It was he who was always with the chief of the omiak whenever the chief of the omiak had trouble with his crew. No one of the crew liked him, but no one of the crew was half so strong. 'Maybe it is for him there is this shooting,' we said to one another.

"Many times was there shooting from the bow and shooting from the stern, but at last there was only shooting from high up in the sticks, for one by one the eyes of the omiak had been going out. We knew then that the omiak was sinking.

"We could hear no more firing and we could hear no more yells, for even the sticks were going down. Soon all that was left was one light on top of the highest of the sticks. And now we could hear only the shrieks of the storm. All at once this one light made one swift move across the blackness, and as it moved there was a sound like a deep breath, and this one light was gone.

"For a long time we were watching and we listened, but all we could hear was the anger of the seas, the wailing of our women and the shrieks of that storm."

The old man lapsed into silence.

"WERE you long on the island?" I asked him after a respectful pause.

"We were caught on this island for four moons," he said, "for soon after the ice came and this ice was never still, but always moving so that we could not walk over it to the land. Most of our hunting things went down with the omiak, and though there were among us three guns we did not have many cartridges, and those that we had were soon used up. There were no deer on this island, for it was small, and no herds of walrus, only seal which were hard to get, so much was the ice round us always moving. On bear, we lived most. There were many bear as there are when the ice is always moving."

"But how did you kill them if all your heavy spears had gone down on the omiak?" I wanted to know.

"By bow and arrow that we made from pieces of the omiak that floated to us after it went down. See, here is one."

Reaching into his tent he fetched forth a bow. He had made it from a stave of an oak cask which had floated in from the wreck. Not only was the wood poor material for a bow, but it was hardly the length of my arm.

"With bows as small as this you killed the bear?"

"Ae."

"And the bows of all the others were as small as this?"

"Ae."

WHILE the old man was rambling on I heard a tell-tale tinkle. It was the maiden with the double row of pennies. She walked into the skin tent.

"Your daughter?" I asked.

"Ae," he replied proudly.

The maiden, with a blush, held out her hand. "Chimo!" she said, smiling. Then, kneeling, she lifted a bearskin robe from the floor of the topek and from under it pulled out a box. It was whaler-built, I could see, for it was made of teak, bound with brass.

She flipped open the lid, brought out a looking-glass and rearranged her hair like any lady of fashion. Then she replaced the mirror in the box, closed down the lid, put the box under the robe again, and hurriedly tinkled out toward the building post. She walked not unlike a penguin, the long tail of her kooletah flapping against her heels at every step.

I was curious about the box. "Let me see it," I asked the old man. He brought it out and placed it in my hand.

"The big man gave it," he said.

"Who?"

"The big man. The big man with the rings in his ears and the long nose and the many teeth."

I knew now that he was referring to the foundered Yankee whaler. "Oh, yes!" You mean the man all the shooting was about."

"Yes, him."

I looked at the lid. On it, crudely painted, was a floral piece of tiny blue flowers. Under them ran the legend:

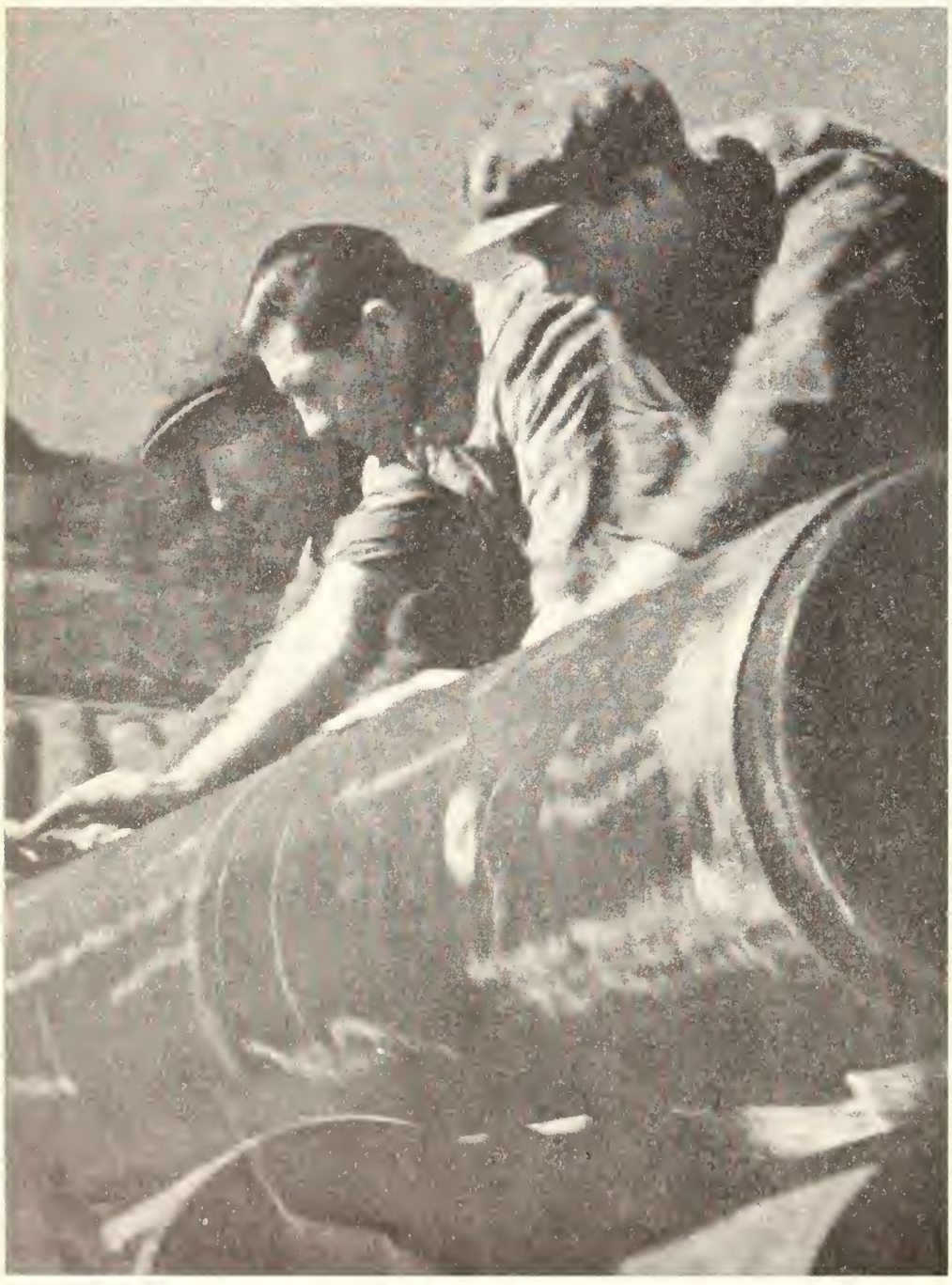
"Forget-me-not!"

★ ★ ★

This extract from Robert Flaherty's 'The Captain's Chair' is made by permission of Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, the Publishers. The book will be reviewed by John Grierson in our next number.

OIL from the EARTH

Its evolution from medicine to motive power told by film



ON the banks of the Allegheny River, in 1848, an American named Samuel Kier was drilling a salt well when, to his embarrassment, at a depth of 400 feet he struck oil. Discovering that this oil had "wonderful medical virtues" he bottled it for sale "in its natural state without any preparation or admixture". In the window of a New York drug-store an American business man named George Bissell saw an advertisement put out by Kier bearing a drawing of the derrick he used for salt drilling and describing how he came to strike oil. Bissell had an idea, and in 1858 he engaged an ex-railroad conductor named Edward Drake to set up a similar derrick on some land he had bought in Pennsylvania and to drill, not for salt, but for oil and not for medicinal purposes but for lighting lamps. Drake and a local blacksmith started work to the amusement and scepticism of the inhabitants. At 36 feet they hit rock and were only able to drill 3 feet a day, but they carried on. On August 27th, 1859, they struck oil, 69½ feet below the surface. Within a few months the population round the well had increased from a few hundred to tens of thousands, and wells were being drilled throughout the district.

The world needed oil in large supplies and better qualities for lubricating machines and for lighting factories and houses. Animal oils and fats were inadequate to meet the demands created by the rapid and steady growth of mechanical industries and urban population during the nineteenth century. In England in 1850, when a Scots chemist named James Young discovered how to produce oil for these purposes from Scottish shale, the price of animal lamp-oil stood at 6*s.* to 8*s.* a gallon in spite of the increased supplies made available by extensions of the whaling industry. Young's lamp-oil cost only 1*s.* 6*d.* a gallon and his process was developed in other countries where deposits of shale and other bituminous coals were found or could be imported. But it was Drake's demonstration that oil could be obtained from the earth by drilling that was to solve the problems of his time and to lead to those uses of oil which have, in the twentieth century, effected a revolution as great as that effected at the end of the eighteenth century by the steam-engine and the steam locomotive.

Drake's drilling for mineral oil and the beginnings of the oil industry in America have been depicted in fictional form in Mamoulian's *High, Wide and Handsome*, while *Paraffin Young*, recently made by the Realist Film Unit, tells the story of James Young's discoveries and of the modern Scottish oil industry which is based on his work. *Oil from the Earth* (produced by Arthur Elton and directed by D'Arcy Cartwright, with music by Ernst Meyer), gives an account of modern drilling for oil, and relates it to the rest of the operations by which oil is discovered, produced and made available in all parts of the world. It presents also a picture of the kind of skilled workmanship, scientific knowledge and complex organisation on which the modern world depends.

Without petrol for motor cars and aeroplanes, fuel oil for ships, and lubricating oils for every kind of machine from watches to turbines, the industry, transport and commerce

Benchley: Is the—is the feature—is the feature on now?
Ticket Seller: If you go in now, you can see a complete show. How many, please?
Benchley: Two, please.
Girl: Find out what's on.
Benchley: Is the feature on in the middle yet?
Ticket Seller: Which one? Next, please.
Benchley; to waiting man: I beg your pardon?
Man: Three, please.
Girl: Come on, come on. We won't get a seat.

Benchley and the girl leave the ticket-box only to be called back by a tap on the glass, by the Ticket Seller.

Ticket Seller: You forgot your change.
Benchley; laughing: Forgot my money.

He rejoins the girl and they go through a door.

Girl: Did you find out what's on?
Benchley: No. I didn't ask her. I wouldn't give her the satisfaction.

The Doorman takes Benchley's tickets and returns the stubs to Benchley.

Benchley: Here—I had only two tickets.
Doorman: These two are for the automobile.
Benchley: My automobile is outside.
Doorman: These are for the drawing on the free auto. Just drop the stubs in the foyer, please.
Benchley: Sounds okay.

As they pass through the foyer, Benchley takes off his topcoat. They look at the car on display, and Benchley drops the ticket stubs in the box.

Usherette: Straight ahead, please.

They go into the cinema Benchley taking his scarf, which he drops and then picks up. Inside the cinema, he turns right.

Usherette: To your left, please, to your left.
Benchley: My mistake, sorry.
Usherette: Aisle Three, to your left.
Benchley: I guess I got out of the wrong side of the bed this morning.
Usherette: Tickets, please.

Benchley hands her the stubs. She looks at them and hands them back.

Usherette: I am sorry, sir, but these are for the automobile. Would you drop them in the box in the foyer?
Benchley: Oh, I guess I dropped in the wrong one.
Usherette: Just a moment, please. Oh, Mr. Pennerly!

Mr. Pennerly comes forward, takes the stubs and looks at them.

Usherette: This gentleman hasn't any tickets.
Benchley; laughing: I dropped them in the automobile box.
Pennerly: Well, I am sorry, Sir, but you're not eligible to win the automobile unless you drop those stubs in the box.
Benchley: But I don't want to win the automobile. I just want to see the movie.
Pennerly: Well, if you didn't want to win the automobile, why did you take the stubs?
Benchley: I didn't take the stubs—well, I took the stubs, sure. But I didn't know I was taking them.
Pennerly: Just a moment, please. Oh, Mr. Bomm!
Mr. Bomm comes forward: Excuse me please.

Mr. Bomm and Mr. Pennerly engage in a whispered conversation.

Benchley: I remember when all this was just a skating rink.
Girl: For all I've seen it well might be.

Bomm comes forward to speak to Benchley.

Mr. Bomm: Now, then, you haven't any tickets at all, eh?
Benchley: Only these.
Mr. Bomm: But these tickets are for—
Bomm and Benchley: The automobile.
Girl: Would it help any if I said I saw him drop the other ones into the box?
Mr. Bomm: Well, Miss, it's slightly irregular, but . . .

He passes them on.

* * *

They are now sitting in the theatre. Benchley is holding his hat, scarf, and coat on his lap.

A boy in the next seat is staring at Benchley and continues staring at him all the time Benchley and the girl are in the seats.

A fat man enters the seats directly in front of Benchley. The fat man moves to the right. Benchley moves his head to the left. A man at the back of Benchley moves his head to the right. The boy is still staring at Benchley.

Benchley moves to the right, the man at the back of him moves forward and speaks.

Man: Would you mind holding still a minute? I want to get a general idea of what this picture is about.

The boy is still staring at Benchley, who, after speaking to the girl, rises.

Benchley: There are some better seats down front.
Girl: Aren't these all right?

Benchley makes his way past seated people, and the girl follows. A man rises to let them pass, starts to sit down again, falls from the seat.

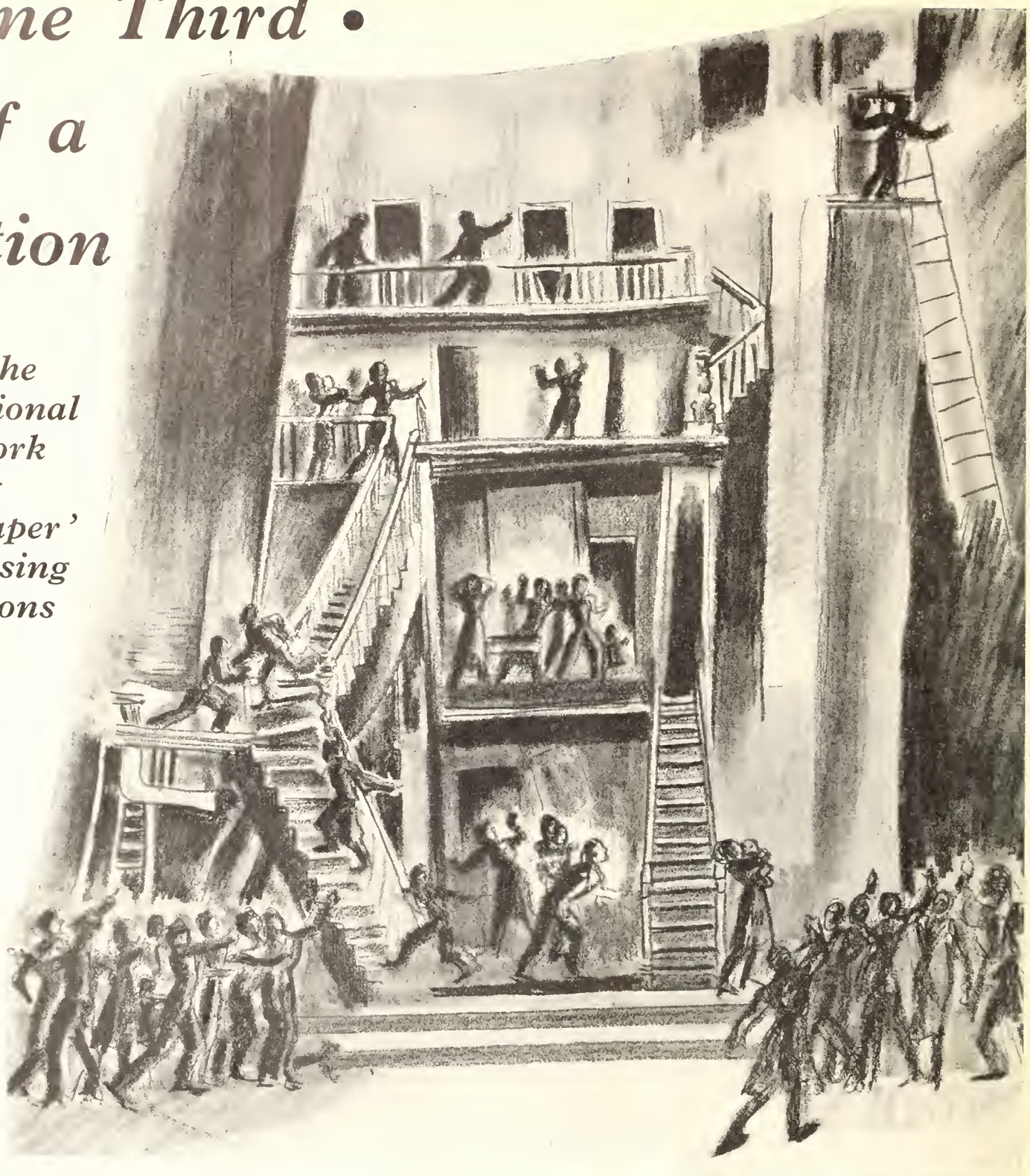
Benchley: Sorry.

Benchley and the girl go along another row, Benchley dragging the sleeve of his coat over the heads of the people in the next row. Just as they reach the two seats a man and woman rush in and take them. They eventually find their way to two aisle seats. These are at an extreme angle, and after straining left and right and squinting, Benchley takes a packet of mints out of his pocket, eats one and coughs. The coughing continues and he eventually gets up and goes to the door marked "Exit". He goes through the door, which shuts behind him and he finds himself in an alley outside the theatre. His coughing subsides, and he tries to open the door which remains shut. He tries another door, then goes up some steps, and re-enters into the building.

Meanwhile the film has given way to a stage show and while dancing girls on the stage are going through a number, Benchley appears from the wings and walks on to the stage. Amidst laughter from the audience, he exits.

• One Third • of a Nation

From the Sensational New York 'Living Newspaper' on Housing Conditions



An impression of the opening fifteen seconds of "One Third of a Nation" . . . a scene of a tenement fire in New York City, which is repeated as the finale of the play . . .

ACT I

SCENE ONE—FIRE!

THE overture, which has, from time to time, introduced a phrase or two—barely distinguishable—of the better known 'home' songs—"Little Grey Home in the West," "Home, Sweet Home," etc., segues into "Home on the Range."

Curtain rises on a slum tenement which appears as a cross-section of a number of tenements. On stage right, the ground floor of a tenement building represents the entrance to a cellar. Above this, a room completely exposed, the walls upstage carrying up to the flies; over this cubicle are walls, possibly from a house that has been demolished and is left standing, showing the plaster lines made by the former floors and stairways.

Upstage and continuing from right to left is a cross-section of a main tenement showing *centre*—two exposed rooms, one over the other, and a narrow stairway to the left leading from the street up to the interior of the house. Continuing upward is the hallway of the third floor and a connecting stairway to the fourth floor.

To the left of this structure stands another small section of a tenement with a fire escape about 24 feet up and one window as an egress to the fire escape.

This whole structure is not meant to portray a realistic tenement house but should have the feeling and essence of

such. The scene develops as follows: AN OLD MAN SCAVENGER enters stage *left*, drawing after him a child's broken-down express cart which has been repaired by adding old carriage wheels, etc. It is loaded with broken scraps of wood. He stops, crosses into the alleyway seeking odds and ends of wood. His action indicates that it is cold and that he is gathering bits of firewood to make him warm and give him shelter. As he rummages in cans, a group of CHILDREN rush up out of the basement *right* screaming and shouting in the midst of their game. They stop as one of the boys suggests that they shoot crap. The game begins.

At the same time, from the topmost floor of the structure, a door opens, a shaft of light crosses the structure and a LITTLE GIRL, carrying a bucket much too large for her proceeds slowly down the structure. During her descent, TWO MEN, returning from work, enter *left* and proceed up the stairway on the *left*. She is met on the second landing by A MAN who continues down the stairs with her, whom she addresses as "Mr. Rosen."* By this time A POLICEMAN has entered stage *left* and has discovered the children shooting crap. He reprimands them, grabs hold of one of them and an argument ensues, as

LOUDSPEAKER

This might be 397 Madison Street, New York,† It might be 245 Halsey Street, Brooklyn,‡ or Jackson Avenue and 10th Street, Long Island City§—in February, 1924.

During this time, A WOMAN has entered with packages and is slowly ascending the stairway. On the upper landing, she meets A WOMAN CARRYING A BABY and they both stop to talk. A DRUNKARD crosses the stage. The POLICEMAN exits and as he does, THE CHILDREN boo after him. At this time, a wisp of smoke appears coming from the basement *right*. The CHILDREN sniff and go to investigate. Almost immediately, there is a slight flurry of excitement and smoke appears in the upper rooms. Excitement; PEOPLE begin to appear in the hallways; muffled shouts of "fire"—"smoke" are heard as smoke and flame appear coming from the basement *left*. By this time, the excitement has spread throughout the structure and more shouts of "fire"; smoke spreads rapidly upwards; A MAN appears on the fire escape *left*. Mr. ROSEN, returning, attempts to get through the crowds which by this time have formed downstage *left*. Fire sirens; FIREMEN appear; THE POLICEMAN returns; KIDS on roller skates with hookey sticks are coming across the stage, all looking upward at the MAN on the fire escape.

There are shouts of "Jump!" "Jump!"; sirens and screams reach their peak as the MAN attempts to use the ladder which is hanging from the fire escape. He tries to unhook it and as he does, it gives way and dangles perilously over the heads of the crowd below. There are more shouts of "Jump!" "Jump!"; more screams; he prepares to jump; a few cries of "Look out" —as we blackout—.

* Fictional character.
† *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
‡ *Ibid.*, February 21, 1924.
§ *Ibid.*, February 24, 1924.

ACT I

SCENE TWO—INVESTIGATION

Loudspeaker
Man (Mr. Rosen)
Commissioner
3 Inspectors
  Fire Department
  Building Department
  Old Building Bureau, Tenement House Department
Secretary
Mr. Schultz—landlord
Man
Automobile Salesman

LOUDSPEAKER

Thirteen persons lost their lives in that fire on Madison Street—four men, two women and seven children. Another man was killed in an unsuccessful attempt to make his way down a fire escape ladder into the yard. When the fire department arrived the building was in flames. Only a few of those inside could be reached . . .‖ What started this fire? Why did it spread so quickly? Why was the death toll so high?

Light up on a table downstage *right*. An overhead spot picks up a MAN, seated, near table. He is the one who tried to get back into the burning building. He is dazed and a little cowed, absorbed in something inside himself, puzzling it out. Upstage, *centre*, seated in a row, the INSPECTORS of the Fire Department, Building Department and the Old Building Bureau of the Tenement House Department.

Downstage *left*, conspicuously empty, a chair. . . .

There is a SECRETARY taking down testimony. All attention is focused on the MAN, *right*, and the COMMISSIONER interrogating him.

COMMISSIONER

(*sympathetically but a little worn, as though this has been going on for some time and he has almost despaired of getting an answer*)

. . . and now, Mr. Rosen,• won't you tell us what happened when you came home?

(*no answer*, ROSEN *just stares ahead, still absorbed, still trying to puzzle it out*)

I realise how difficult this is, but we're trying to get at what caused this fire, and you've got to help us. That's how we can prevent more fires, by finding out about these things and correcting them.

(*no answer*)
(*almost pleadingly*)

Mr. Rosen . . .

‖ *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
• Fictional character.

ROSEN

(*turns his head, regards* COMMISSIONER; *then slowly*)

They no let me into the house.

(*He stares out again*)

COMMISSIONER

(*gratefully*)

Thank you. And then, what happened?

ROSEN

My wife burn up. In bed. My two children burn up, in bed.

(*He faces* COMMISSIONER)

Sons: Mine! Two!

COMMISSIONER

(*eagerly*)

And then?

ROSEN

And then. . . . They no let me into the house.

(*relapses into his brooding*)

COMMISSIONER

(*giving it up as a bad job*)

That's all. Thank you.

(*stands regarding* ROSEN *for a moment—then turns quickly and sharply to* FIRE INSPECTOR)

Are you the Fire Inspector?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER

What do you know about this?

FIRE INSPECTOR

The flames started in the cellar.**

COMMISSIONER

How?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Probably in a pile of rubbish. We're not sure.

COMMISSIONER

What ignited the rubbish?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Cigarette, maybe. We don't know that, either.

COMMISSIONER

What happened then?

FIRE INSPECTOR

The halls went up and the stairways. That's why they couldn't get out. Then the walls caved in. You couldn't stop it because the wainscoting was made of wood. That carried the flames right up like somebody ran along it with a torch.††

COMMISSIONER

Is wooden wainscoting a violation?

FIRE INSPECTOR

(*looking at* COMMISSIONER *then nodding his head in direction of* BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR)

Well, er . . . maybe you'd better ask the Building Department about that.

COMMISSIONER

(*crosses to* BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR)

Are you the Inspector of the Building Department?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR

Yes, sir.

** Digest of Report of New York Board of Fire Underwriters on February 19, 1924, Tenement Fire at 397 Madison Street, New York—Municipal Reference Library, New York, N.Y.
†† Digest of Report. *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.

COMMISSIONER
When was this house built?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
1884. It's an old law tenement.*

COMMISSIONER
What's an old law tenement?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
One that was built before the law of 1901.†

COMMISSIONER
What law was that?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
It said that any building erected after that date had to have certain improvements like a separate water closet for each apartment, adequate fire escapes and side courts twelve feet wide in place of the old air shaft 28 inches wide and so forth.‡

COMMISSIONER
And those already built and still in use?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
Well, they had to conform to the new law in certain respects.

COMMISSIONER
What respects?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
Well, they had to have fire escapes.§

COMMISSIONER
How about wooden wainscoting? Is that a violation?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
In a new house, yes.

COMMISSIONER
In an old law tenement?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
No!

COMMISSIONER
Have you recently inspected the premises at 397 Madison Street?

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR
Well, er, that comes under the duties of the Tenement Houses Department.

COMMISSIONER
(*crosses to* TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR)
Are you the Tenement House Inspector?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER
Did you re-examine the premises at 397 Madison Street?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Yes, sir. About six months ago.‖

COMMISSIONER
What did you find?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
An adequate number of fire escapes with vertical ladders as required by law.¶

COMMISSIONER
Is the collection of rubbish in the cellar a violation?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
It is.

COMMISSIONER
Did you find any there?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
No, I didn't.

COMMISSIONER
But you haven't been there in six months. Why?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Because we haven't received any complaint since.

COMMISSIONER
You mean a house is never inspected unless a complaint has been received?**

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Exactly.

COMMISSIONER
(*sharply*)
But you did receive one six months ago?††

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER
(*eager to discover a violation*)
What was it for?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Roaches.

COMMISSIONER
Roaches.

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Roaches.

COMMISSIONER
. . . Mr. Inspector, why must you wait for complaints before an inspection is made? Why don't you have periodic inspections?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
(*rises; distinctly enumerating statistics*)
Mr. Commissioner, we have 224 inspectors to cover 105,000 tenements‡‡ and apartment houses. It would take our entire staff three years to visit each one of these houses once.§§

COMMISSIONER
I see. . . . Just one more thing, Mr. Inspector, in the light of your years of experience in the Department, would you consider this building a firetrap?

TENEMENT HOUSE INSPECTOR
Mr. Commissioner, if that building is a firetrap, then so is every old law tenement in New York City‖‖, *and there are* 67,000 *of them!*¶¶

COMMISSIONER
That's all, gentlemen. Thank you. My report will state that a fire of undetermined origin broke out in the basement of the house at 397 Madison Street. . . . According to your testimony there were no violations and all the laws were scrupulously——
(*They all rise and prepare to leave*)

LOUDSPEAKER
(*breaking in*)
Just a moment, Mr. Commissioner. Has *everybody* testified?

COMMISSIONER
Why, yes. . . .

LOUDSPEAKER
Well, how about that empty chair? Don't you think there ought to be somebody in it?

(COMMISSIONER *shakes head in bewilderment*)
Well, you want to get at the bottom of this thing, don't you?

COMMISSIONER
Certainly.

LOUDSPEAKER
And you want to prevent more fires, by finding out about these things and correcting them, don't you?

COMMISSIONER
That's what I'm here for.

LOUDSPEAKER
(*with finality*)
Then let's call the landlord!

COMMISSIONER
Oh, no, I can't do that?

LOUDSPEAKER
Why not?

COMMISSIONER
The law doesn't allow me to. Only in a clear case of violation are we permitted to call in the landlord.* And you heard what they said:
(*nodding to* INSPECTORS)
there were no violations.

LOUDSPEAKER
Well, that settles it. . . . Of course, we can't break the law.
(*There is a pause, then, insidiously*)
But wouldn't you like to know what he's got to say, anyhow . . . just, sort of, off the record?

COMMISSIONER
I certainly would!

LOUDSPEAKER
Fine. I'll call him!
(*calling*)
Mr. Schultz!† Mr. Schultz! Is Mr. Schultz in the house?

SCHULTZ
(*emerges from alley left, where he has been looking over his building*)
Someone call me?

LOUDSPEAKER
Hello, Mr. Schultz, how are you?

SCHULTZ
I'm all right.

LOUDSPEAKER
And how is Mrs. Schultz?

SCHULTZ
She's all right, too. But the baby, Carl, he's got the measles.

LOUDSPEAKER
I see, Mr. Schultz, would you mind testifying about your house on Madison Street?

SCHULTZ
(*a bit suspicious*)
No, I wouldn't mind. Where do I go?

LOUDSPEAKER
Go right over to the table there.
(*as* SCHULTZ *comes to table*)
Mr. Commissioner, this is Carl Schultz, Senior. . . . Mr. Schultz, this is the Commissioner.

(SCHULTZ *and* COMMISSIONER *shake hands*)
There you are. The witness is yours.
(SCHULTZ *starts a bit as he spies* ROSEN)

* Report of New York State Board of Housing, Legislative Document (1932), 84, p. 11.
† Report of N.Y. State Board of Housing. Legislative Document (1932).
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 15.
§ *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
‖ *Ibid.*
¶ *Ibid.*

** New York City Tenement House Department.
†† *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
‡‡ Langdon Post, N.Y. City Tenement House Commissioner.
§§ *New York Times*, February 19, 1924.
‖‖ *Ibid.*
¶¶ Report of the N.Y. State Board of Housing Legislative Document (1932), 84.

* New York State Statute Tenement House Act, 1909, Section 143.
† Fictional character—scene creative.

COMMISSIONER

Won't you sit down, Mr. Schultz?

(*waves him to empty chair*, SCHULTZ *sits*)

Now, Mr. Schultz, were there any violations in your house?

(SCHULTZ *hesitates and looks up at the loudspeaker for advice*)

LOUDSPEAKER

Go on, Carl. It's all off the record!

SCHULTZ

Well, maybe a few. But they were all small and had nothing to do with the fire.

COMMISSIONER

Now, do you live in that house?

SCHULTZ

(*looking up at him*)

I do not!

COMMISSIONER

Why not?

SCHULTZ

(*slowly*)

Well, er, I got to live near my butcher store uptown.

COMMISSIONER

Is that the only reason?

SCHULTZ

(*slyly*)

That's the only one I tell you about!

COMMISSIONER

I see. . . . Now tell me, why did you never renovate that house . . . fix it over, so it would be a better place to live in, and not such a firetrap.

SCHULTZ

Well, first, I don't have any money. Second, it's not any worse than any other tenement on the block; and third, if I do have the money and fix it up I have to raise the rent to get my money back. The tenants they have no money to pay *and everybody moves out!*

(*spreading hands to express that*)

COMMISSIONER

Did you make any money on your house, Mr. Schultz?

SCHULTZ

Some years yes, some years no. After mortgage is paid, sometimes a little, sometimes nothing.

(*shakes head, sadly*)

Ach, it is a bad investment.

LOUDSPEAKER

(*suddenly, sharply*)

Do you want to sell, Mr. Schultz?

SCHULTZ

(*A bargaining look comes into his eyes; he becomes cautious*)

Sell? Well, maybe!

LOUDSPEAKER

I'll give you just what you paid for it, even though the house to-day in 1924 . . . is practically worthless.

(SCHULTZ *shakes his head, turning it down*)

When you bought that house twenty-five years ago, it was almost brand new. To-day it's just a rubbish heap—a slum. Come on, Mr. Schultz, you can get rid of it without losing a cent!

(SCHULTZ *shakes his head again*)

Perhaps you don't understand. Let me show you what happens when people try to get rid of something they've used for a long time.

(*Spot picks out* MAN *and automobile* SALESMAN, *left*)

MAN

I'd like to sell my car.

SALESMAN

What make?

MAN

Dodge.

SALESMAN

What model?

MAN

Sedan.

SALESMAN

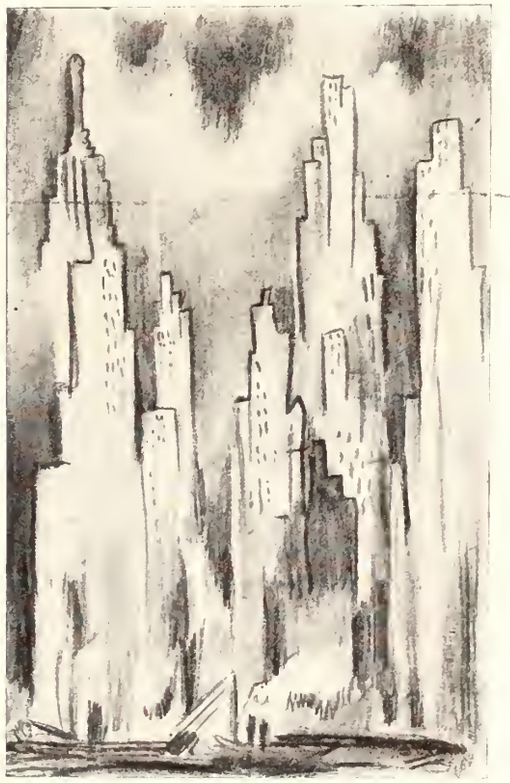
What condition?

MAN

It's four years old. Cost me $2,300.*

SALESMAN

I'll give you five hundred.†



MAN

Five hundred!

SALESMAN

Mister, the minute you bought that car it became second-hand. Every day you hold on to it, it's worth less. Come around and see me next year, and I'll give you three hundred.‡

MAN

$500!

SALESMAN

$500! And you'd better grab it before I change my mind!

(*Blackout on the* TWO MEN)

LOUDSPEAKER

D'you see, Mr. Schultz, that's what happens.

SCHULTZ

(*self-satisfied*)

Not to me it won't.

LOUDSPEAKER

No matter what you have, furniture, clothing, a bicycle, or a yacht—the longer you hold on to it and use it—the lower the price drops.

SCHULTZ

(*leans forward*)

You know the trouble with that fellow? He didn't invest his money in real estate.

LOUDSPEAKER

In a house, you mean?

SCHULTZ

No. My house is just like you say—rubbish heap, a slum. Ah, but the land it's on. That's different!

LOUDSPEAKER

Oh, *the land!*

SCHULTZ

In a big city like this, land never goes down. If you held on to it long enough it goes up, up, up all the time! I pay more than it's worth when I buy, I get more when I sell! I cannot fix up the apartments, I cannot lower the rents, why? Because the land cost too much! The man who sold it to me, he made three hundred per cent—*on the land!* Each time rents went up, up, up!

LOUDSPEAKER

But, Mr. Schultz, you're speculating, and if you're successful, the standard of living of six million people§ goes down. They still have to pay more in rent and do without other things that they need.

SCHULTZ

(*rises, almost hysterically*)

Speculating? Sure, I am! And so is every other landlord who expects to make anything out of his investment! I tell you, it's land, LAND, LAND! *That's where the money is!* And I don't sell mine without a nice big profit!

(*There is a pause. For the first time* ROSEN *looks up. Slowly he rises and crosses to* SCHULTZ)

ROSEN

(*softly*)

And me? What about me?

SCHULTZ

(*slowly, earnestly*)

Mr. Rosen, believe me, I'm sorry for you. I'll do anything I can to help you. . . . But if you can only afford to pay $24 a month, you'll have to live in my house or one just like it—and you cannot blame me.

(*a pause—even more slowly*)

You'll have to go back a long time and blame whatever it was that made New York City real estate the soundest and most profitable speculation on the face of the earth.

(*Hold—as they regard each other, and DIM OUT*)

* Branham's Automobile Reference Book, 1928, p. 56.

† *New York American*, June 22, 1924—classified advertisements.

‡ *Ibid.*, June 19, 1925.

§ 1935 *World Almanac*, p. 483: Population New York City, 1924.

These extracts from 'One Third of a Nation' are taken from the Press Edition of the play, issued by the Federal Theatre Project, New York.

EUROPEAN STORM CENTRE

Front page story in the world's newspapers, Czechoslovakia forms the subject of the March of Time's newest issue.
The film describes the Czech Republic as "democratic Island marked for conquest by Nazi Germany."

Map showing mountain fortresses of the Republic. *(March of Time)*

All pictures on these pages are from The March of Time film on Czechoslovakia.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, storm centre of Central Europe, product of the Peace Treaties, a nation made up of many nationalities, marked down by Hitler for conquest.

Inside the boundaries of this tiny Republic are three and a half million Germans, out of a total population of fifteen millions.

March of Time No. 3 (Fourth Year) commentary tells the story thus:

In all anxious Europe, in 1938, few men have a greater responsibility than the National Defence Council of Czechoslovakia.

This little Central European republic, born of the great war, is to-day a democratic island marked for conquest by Nazi Germany.

Masaryk, its first President, who died in 1937, upheld the loftiest ideals of liberal democracy, and left to his successor, Dr. Eduard Benes, a nation whose progress had won it the world's respect.

Out of Prague, for centuries a provincial Austrian city, has emerged the modern capital of a vigorous young nation, the centre of a commerce and industry reaching out across the world.

To-day, Czechoslovakia maintains complete freedom of religion, of the press and of speech. Moreover, it is a nation of minority groups, the largest of them being the 3,500,000 Germans concentrated in the Sudeten Mountain regions—tied by language, customs, and sympathies to the Germany of their ancestors.

When world depression brought hard times and unemployment to the Sudeten Germans, they blamed the Czechs, whom they had always despised. Soon discontent took political shape, and with its 2,000,000 members working closely with Nazi Germany, the Sudeten party began to make its influence felt.

In Czechoslovakia is an abundance of Germany's greatest needs: rich agriculture, flourishing industry, wealthy deposits of raw materials and great munition factories. But most important is her strategic value. Encircled by heavily fortified mountain ranges Czechoslovakia is a natural fortress, commanding the whole of Central Europe.

Because its well-equipped army is only a quarter the size of Hitler's, Czechoslovakia's prime guarantee of safety has always been its close alliance with powerful France. But in 1938, the Czechs, already concerned by a Franco-British alliance for peace, watched with anxiety as Conrad Henlein, leader of the Sudeten German party flew to Berlin after talking with British statesmen in London.

With rumours of German troop movements across the border, President Benes, remembering the fate of Austria, quickly mobilised the entire man-power of Czechoslovakia's standing army and reserves, a force 400,000 strong. For the first time, a small nation, unaided, defied the thunderings of the mightiest warlord of modern times. Then came word that if Czechoslovakia was attacked, France would fight. And as the jubilant Czechs learnt that Hitler's troops had fallen back from the frontier, they knew that they had won. But in the full knowledge that this was not the end, the nation issued a decree assigning every man, woman and child to their defence stations in readiness for war. For the valiant little republic is determined that Hitler will never destroy Czech freedom until he has first destroyed the Czech people.

AS World Film News goes to Press the world watches anxiously while European statesmen seek a compromise which will satisfy the demands of the Sudetenese German, and avoid the military conquest of the Republic by Hitler.

Armed conflict between Germany and the Czech Republic could involve France: it could involve Russia: it could involve Britain.

Will Czechoslovakia prove the cause of a general European War? Will a sudden onslaught by Germany overcome resistance so swiftly that allies will be powerless, and Hitler's conquest be achieved? Or will compromise be found satisfactory to both the Czechs and the Nazis?

These are the questions anxious observers are asking. By the time World Film News appears the answers may be known.

President Benes signs the mobilisation orders . . .

The man-power of the small Republic is mobilised

The swiftness of the Czech mobilisation surprised Hitler . . . his troops fell back from the Czech frontier . . .

TIME
And the
COWBOYS

From Bill Hart to Buck Jones, the "Western" has remained much the same and kept its popularity.

Unknown to the sophisticates of London movie-land are these stars of the saddle, Buck Jones, Bill Boyd, George O'Brien.

Article by THOMAS BAIRD

Above: Buck Jones.

Right: William S. Hart, cowboy star of the silent days, in "Tumbleweeds" (Picture from "Movie Parade," by Paul Rotha; Studio Publishing Co.)

JUST the other day I was walking through the Empire Exhibition. I had done my rather tiresome duty to Engineering and Industry, lifted my hat to the United Kingdom, been a little thrilled by the Victoria Falls, impressed by the Scottish Pavilion and rather impatient in the Palace of Arts. I then went to the Amusement Park which I suppose is the ultimate justification of all exhibitions. Not having the stomach for the major tortures I went for the side shows where I tried to do easy looking impossibilities with hoops and pennies. Turning away after innumerable attempts to win ten shillings I saw a panorama of the most amazing posters.

I was not alone in my admiration. In front of me were two small boys. They stood entranced before a poster of a highly coloured corner of some mythical jungle whose every point of vantage displayed a fearsome group of the most savage animals. The look of amazement on the faces of these small boys took me back to the days when I, too, believed that for the sum of threepence I would be transported to the depths of savage Africa. The will to believe dies hard; many times I have paid my money well knowing that the inside of the tent would be vastly different from the gaudy poster and its legend outside . . . . but still hoping hopelessly. Looking at these two youngsters I could remember a day when the show was as great as the poster.

Twenty years ago the milestones of my life were such momentous events as the annual setting out for the seaside, the water-pistol season, the discovery of pea-shooters, kick-the-can, the Rangers-Celtic football match . . . and Hengler's Circus.

Once a year for many years I was taken to see this amazing show, a mélange of all the traditional elements . . . gladiators, ballerinas, clowns, trapeze artists, horses, elephants, pigeons, cowboys, redskins, fakirs, a band all scarlet and gold and an unbelievably exciting finale known as The Water Scene. The fascinating thing about Hengler's Circus was that the ring could be flooded. This was obviously useful for sea lion acts but that was a detail; it was helpful to water-clowns but that also was a detail. The flooding of the ring stood for something much more important. In the grand finale of cowboys and Indians the ring could become the lake in the cañon, it could become the mysterious pool in which innocent victims sank to unplumbed depths never to rise again. It became the pool which lay below the rapids down which, from sixty feet above, descended a stream of whooping redskins. Half way down the rapids, shots from the rifles of cowboys caused the redskins in the canoes to leap in magnificent death throes and be hurled to the depths below. But greatest of all variations on the water theme was The Bursting of the Dam. This invariably happened in the last ten minutes of the circus. Then Hell broke loose as a solid column of water fell from about a hundred feet above into the ring carrying with it papier maché boulders, three-ply log-cabins, birch bark canoes, prancing mustangs, heroic cowboys and painted Indians. No poster artist ever exaggerated that scene of terror or even did it justice. The advertisements were in fact a pale shadow of the reality.

The site of Hengler's Circus is now occupied by a cinema.

It was perhaps in the nature of things that the Cinema should take possession, not merely of the sites of the circuses, but that they should also take over the fundamentals. The very first films had just the elements I used to find in Hengler's—cowboys and Indians, clowns' slap-stick, action, surprise and suspense. As the circuses and the fairgrounds less and less kept the promise of their barkers, the cinema more and more kept faith with small boys.

It is significant that some of the cinema's first stars were its clowns. Pantomime is international, age-old and ageless. Almost invariably the clown steals the show. With Chaplin on the Bill, most actors look like two cents. Comedian Kelly in the stalls of Olympia can outshine the tinsel of the ring. Only the other week, Joe Jackson, far from the top of the Bill at the Palladium put all of the rest in the background. Long after he had gone from the stage we were haunted by his silent gestures. Jackson is a genius. From his first fumbling entrance, when he disentangles himself from the curtain, to his last hilarious adventure on a dilapidated bicycle which he almost accidentally discovers, he is mute and glorious; pathetic, audacious, simple, subtle, panther-like and elephantine, confiding and aloof all by turns.

THE early films also laid hold on the fundamental appeal of cowboys and Indians, gun-play and chases. One of the first stars was William S. Hart. Hart was everybody's idol. He was the first of a long run of cowboy stars which included Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Gary Cooper and Buck Jones. To-day that line continues. Terry Ramsaye, writing in *Fame* 1938, after describing the Number One Stars says "There is another category of fame which is special to Main Street, a department of screen entertainment which the trade vernacular makes it most convenient to call 'Westerns' . . . it seems that out in the great big heart of America there is an audience that finds special satisfaction in drama of more physical excitement, vastly less sophistication than the highly enamelled dramatics of the 'A' and 'Super-A' productions, an escape from the talk-laden intricacies and intimacies of fictional drawing-rooms and out into the big open spaces 'west of Pecos' and 'in the Panamint,' the rootin', tootin', hell-for-leather, 'we'll head 'em off at Lone Tree Gulch' kind of fare.

"In that world of the drama of the open places, of simple faiths and simple motivations, theirs is an order of fame important and comparable only to itself."

By vote of United States Exhibitors the first ten Western stars are Gene Autry, Bill Boyd, Buck Jones, Dick Foran, George O'Brien, Tex Ritter, Bob Steele, Three Mesquiteers, Charles Starrett, Ken Maynard, with Johnny Mack Brown, Tim McCoy, Hoot Gibson, Jack Holt, Harry Carey further down the list. Now these are not votes collected from Boy Scouts but from the hard-headed exhibitors of the United States. It may come as a shock to you, especially when *Time* printed as it did in May this year :—

LAST ROUNDUP

In Chicago a month ago Tim McCoy's Real Wild West and Rough Riders of the World were let loose with charging horses, yippiding cowboys, lassos thrown to rope in the general public. In Washington last week McCoy's broncos seemed all too sadly busted. First, F. Stewart Stranahan of Providence, R.I., with a $17,500 claim against the show, threw it into receivership. Then, padding at Stranahan's heels a delegation of McCoy's Sioux Redmen visited Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, threatened a sitdown strike against Tim McCoy unless he: (1) came through with back pay, (2) furnished more than one clean shirt a week, (3) provided free war paint. Sent back to the show by Collier, the Sioux refused to perform. In a big frontier-drama act where white men were supposed to make Indians bite the dust, for two performances there was not a Sioux Indian to bite.

After that, there were no performances at all. Restrained by court order from moving on to Baltimore, the show folded for good in Washington, a martyr to McCoy's belief that the Buffalo Bill tradition still has life in it.

No doubt about the last two lines. Most people speak of the cowboys in that vein, as part of the good old days beyond recall, and here is what *Time* had to say about William S. Hart in February :—

BATHOS

For many a cinema oldster no memory is quite so thrilling as that of two-gun, square-shooting William S. Hart, limned with his painted pony against a two-reel Western sky. One melancholy day last week 67-year-old Bill Hart stood disconsolate by a deep, wide, newly dug grave on his Southern California ranch. A few neighbours stood with him; Mexican guitars softly slurred La Golondrina. Slowly the ranch hands lowered a gaunt, bay-and-white carcass into the grave, covered it over. It was the end of the trail for 31-year-old pinto pony Fritz, who shared all Actor Hart's cinema glory, retired with him over a decade ago. In a voice that seemed near breaking, Bill Hart spoke a brief eulogy: "He was the finest, bravest horse that ever lived . . . We understood and loved each other."

But *Time* and some more of us do not get far enough away from the too, too adult audience of the Broadways and West Ends. We forget the Main Streets and the Middletowns and we forget the Main Street streak in most of us. The fact is there are more cowboy stars to-day than ever before. Some, it is true, have capitulated to the march of time. These ones sing—not the real songs of the cowboys but re-vamped, jazzed-up versions. But some of the men of the old tradition stand high in the list of popularity. True, Gene Autry with his music to help him out heads the list, but number two and number three are Bill Boyd and Buck Jones, playing only one instrument—a shooting iron.

[*Continued on page* 169.

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You may say that America has a reason for hanging on to her Western stars. It is part of her history. But British exhibitors say to-day much the same thing. In spite of the fact that there are fewer cinemas in Britain than in America, the total number of votes recorded for the Western stars was only slightly less in Great Britain. Here is their roster of fame: Gene Autry, Buck Jones, Dick Foran, William Boyd, George O'Brien, John Wayne, Tim McCoy, Ken Maynard, Harry Carey, Hoot Gibson. If you want to see their pictures you have, of course, to go a little way from Leicester Square but you will find them in their hundreds not three miles away, and in their thousands all over the provinces. There is ample evidence that the youngsters still hold in their hearts a large corner for the cowboys. The singing cowboys do not rate with them. It is Buck Jones that counts. Buck has fallen heir to the reverence once accorded to William S. Hart, Broncho Billy and Tom Mix.

BUCK JONES followed the line of most cowboy stars. He was a real cowboy, came into pictures almost by accident and like all the others, tried to make his personal popularity carry over to the old Wild West Show—and failed. He, too, found that while the Western tradition is far from dead, the cinema has beaten the circus at its own game. Here is part of his story as told recently by J. B. Crisswold in *The American Magazine:—*

On the street early one morning he met a friend from Oklahoma who was dolled up in a ten-gallon hat, boot and chaps.

"Where's the rodeo?" Buck asked.

"I'm on my way to the studio," said the friend proudly. "I'm in pictures."

"What kind of pictures?"

"Moving pictures. They make 'em here."

This was news to Buck.

"Come along", said the friend, "and watch me act."

So Buck went along and was standing around watching his friend act, when somebody said, "Go over and make up as a sheepherder."

Buck told me, "I got five dollars a day for six days—more than I'd made in a month. And all I did was sit under a wickiup. I said to myself, 'I've been in a lot of screwy businesses, but this is far and away the screwiest. I'd like to get in it."

Even screwier things were to happen. Buck was the handsomest cowboy who had ever been seen in Hollywood, and one of the best riders. He wasn't afraid to try anything and had little trouble in getting work. He played small parts in several pictures and doubled in dangerous stunts for William Farnum and Tom Mix.

The producer decided Tom Mix might work a little harder if he thought he had a potent rival. And Buck was thrown into a situation so insane that even Hollywood blinked its eyes.

Buck's boss advised him to get out and show himself and to act like a Big Shot, like Mix. But Mix was a master in the art of acting like the Big Shot he was, and even if Buck bought the loudest cowboy clothes in town he never could hope to out-act Tom Mix. So the producer had a Big Idea. He took Buck to the best tailor and the best haberdasher in Los Angeles and bought him $2,500 worth of clothes, including a silk hat, a dress suit, a cutaway coat, spats, a cane, patent-leather shoes, and tailor-made shirts with Buck's monogram on the sleeve.

"Wear these," said the producer. "Get out and be seen. It'll worry Mix."

"I knew all movie people were crazy", Buck told me, "so I just decided this fellow was crazier than any of them and I'd better humour him." And, quite uncomfortable and bewildered, Buck, with Mrs. Buck, went out to worry Tom Mix.

It didn't make sense to Buck, but the sight of a cowboy in silk hat, cutaway and spats certainly alarmed Hollywood and may have worried Mix. Anyway, the producer seemed to be satisfied and after a couple of months Buck was allowed to be himself again.

Ten years later, in 1931, Buck was getting $3,000 a week as a star. He was booked on a personal-appearance tour with Silver, and the salary was $5,000 a week.

Buck reasoned, "If one guy and one horse could make that much money, what could he do with a Wild West Show?"

Because he had refused to gamble in the boom days, the market crash had affected him not at all. He had saved $375,000. He decided to become another Buffalo Bill and Miller Brothers combined, and organized the Buck Jones Wild West Show. Mrs. Jones thought it was a good idea and she appeared with Buck in the show.

It opened in San Francisco and closed three months later, in Danville, Ill., when a sheriff took it over. Buck lost every cent he had. A rival show had ruined him by tearing down his billing. He would get into a town and find that nobody knew he was coming.

Inexperienced, he didn't know how to fight such practices and he moved from town to town, playing to small crowds, paying the expenses out of his own bankroll, refusing to quit.

The show that had put him out of business offered Buck $3,000 a week to join it. He said he'd starve, first—and he almost did. He drove back to Hollywood, sleeping in the car because he didn't have enough money to pay for a hotel room.

But if the cowboy tradition seemed dead on the road, it was still very much alive on the films. Buck came back modestly but very surely. Now Buck "produces his own pictures, and has mastered the science of quantity production at low cost. The Big Stars make about four a year, consuming from six weeks to six months in shooting time, and the cost may be from $500,000 to $1,000,000. Buck shoots a picture in eight or ten days, makes eight a year at a cost of about $65,000 each, and their gross revenue is approximately $160,000 each. He is paid production cost and 20 per cent. of the gross."

These cheap, well-made pictures do more than thrill each generation of youngsters. They make stars: they make directors. Carole Lombard and Gary Cooper graduated out of "horse opera" and W. S. Van Dyke directed Buck Jones for four years.

Buck Jones's pictures are not only good—they are Good. When the Hays Office and the purity campaigners started their clean-up, they found Buck above criticism. He gets his man but he does not shoot him, usually it is arranged that fists and not guns do the job, and when shooting is necessary the Bad Ones usually shoot each other. Buck never starts a fight, he only defends himself. There is no gambling, there are no love scenes. All this he believes increases his popularity, as the roll of the Buck Jones Rangers, a publicity stunt which has signed on 2,000,000 youngsters, clearly shows. This Hays Office version of the Boy Scouts is sworn to the creed of Buck Jones, the White Man on the White Horse.

NORTH SEA and YELLOW JACK

Reviewed by Basil Wright

IT would be very unfair to Cavalcanti and Watt to bespatter *North Sea* with indiscriminate eulogies, for it is a film which merits close and constructive criticism. Nevertheless, after seeing it several times I can feel no inclination towards any comprehensive iconoclasms, for in essentials it is as right as rain; it rates right at the top for drama, sincerity, and for a big step forward in the history of the documentary film. To the reconstruction of a real-life incident and to the presentation of a highly organised and everyday process it brings not only the intimate observation of ordinary men about their work, but also the accurate (and therefore so much more moving) presentation of the behaviour of ordinary men—can you or I, sophisticated citizen-readers, dare hope to identify ourselves?—in a time of mortal danger. With all due deference to the storm, which is the real thing, beautifully shot and cut, and makes *The Hurricane* look like something at Drury Lane; with even more deference to Jones and Fowle, whose camerawork, under obviously fantastic difficulties, is fine without being precious; with superlative deference to the G.P.O. itself, which not only paid for the film but also provided the intricacies of the ship-to-shore wireless service on which the whole story revolves; with deference in fact to all the people and things who helped, it is really in the direction of the dialogue sequences, in studio or on location, that the major importance of the film resides.

A new style emerges, and a new technique. The actors act, but they are not actors; the director interferes with the most intimate realities, and yet by the imposition of his own ideas achieves a reality more vivid still. Here is a line of action which should, and I hope will, mean a new injection of life into the inert and comatose brainpans of the British studios. There are hundreds of similar subjects to hand, the box-office receipts are assured, and the public will be getting something it really wants.

It is significant that adverse criticism of *North Sea* directs itself almost entirely against those sequences least concerned with human intimacies. True, the overslow opening of the film, and the occasional overplaying of the dramatic hand, as in the black-pudding sequence, are more personal. But the major faults, such as the underdeveloped fishing sequence, the embarrassing Sunday hymn-singing (if religion had to be used, need it have been so sentimentally C. of E., with all the grim richness of Covenanting Scotland at Watt's disposal), and the final sequence of all—a sort of tacked-on advert for the Post Office which almost (it cannot entirely, thank goodness) destroys the drama of the last shot of the film, when the radio-operator tunes back to his routine work—all these do not affect the main importance, nor do they ultimately invalidate the fierce human appeal which I hope the public, the producers, and the exhibitors will actively remember. I for one have seen few things so dramatic as the skipper asking for a salvage tug after his aerial has, unknown to him, been destroyed; he speaks, urgently but without panic, to a wilderness of sea and sky and to an unresponsive ether, while the ship rolls and creaks beneath him with a renewed menace in her clogged and damaged innards.

ONE would have been glad to see *Yellow Jack* treated in the same way, for it deals with a subject of more than equal importance and wider implications. It is the story of the men who made possible, through their researches and practical work in Cuba, the building of the Panama Canal, by the stamping out of yellow fever. Until it could be proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the infection could be carried only by a stegomyia mosquito which had previously bitten an infected person, there was no way of preventing the wiping out of whole communities, towns and districts with the suddenness and finality of one of Egypt's plagues. It is a really exciting story, first, in terms of detection and the elimination of all suspects save one, and secondly of the proof, to achieve which a band of army volunteers must risk their lives by exposing themselves to every form of aggravated infection.

Bob Montgomery, retaining his Irish accent from *Night Must Fall*, is the chief volunteer, and indulges in an incredibly silly and tenuous love affair with the local nurse, none other than the beauteous Virginia Bruce in a welter of starch, stripes and blondeness. This you see, is where Hollywood comes a cropper, by its inability to realise that it is no good bill-posting a love affair on to the backside of a script about scientific research and heroism; it must either be an integral part of the plot, or scrapped without compunction. *Yellow Jack* is, in general, not a well made film; much of it is slow, undistinguished, and clogged with bad dialogue. But it does make the grade when the scientific story is allowed to come to the fore, because the presentation is sufficiently sincere to give us a sense of the implications of the work, and because of the brilliant shooting of the villain stegomyia itself, which whizzes in a sinister fashion across the screen, and, magnified to the nth degree, injects its fatal cargo into the skin of research doctor and humble soldier alike.

A CROP of COMEDIES

Marion Fraser reviews 'Professor Beware,' 'Thank Evans' and 'Swiss Miss.'

THREE comedy features are running in the West End: *Professor Beware*, *Thank Evans* and *Swiss Miss*. Harold Lloyd, Max Miller and Laurel and Hardy are the comedians concerned. The humour in all three films depends on the reaction of the individuals to awkward or unpleasant situations, but the American pictures have the added attraction of large doses of slapstick. The British picture is therefore much more dependent on its characterization. It is to Max Miller's credit that he does a sufficiently good job to bring his picture into fair competition with the other two.

To take the oldest-timer first, Harold Lloyd repeats the set-up that he has used consistently in his past films. It is as follows: A rather simple young man gets into trouble, falls in love and performs various miracles of courage and physical endurance in order to win the girl. This theme is tagged on quite legitimately to a convenient setting. In this case Harold Lloyd is an Egyptologist who is led to believe that he is living over again the life of a figure in Egyptian mythology. The situations which this lay-out allows for are imaginative but not as funny as one could hope, and Harold Lloyd has made this type of picture much better before. However the final slapstick sequence when the hero is proving his valour makes up to a large extent, for Lloyd is as athletic as ever and though his exploits are not hair-raising they are sufficiently impossible to be exciting.

THE Max Miller picture is more close to reality. Evans is a racing tipster whose eloquence is the same, off the track or on. The characters that surround him are as exaggerated as his own portrayal of the tipster and if one accepts the music-hall tradition there is nothing to stop one from having a good deal of enjoyment from the film. *Thank Evans* should appeal to British audiences. Its humour is sufficiently broad and its technique sufficiently good to make a fair-minded audience overlook its British origin. It moves fast and the dialogue is competent.

We have seen a good deal less of Max Miller on the screen than any of the other comedians mentioned here. His particular contribution is unlike theirs in almost every respect, but he does bring a freshness to film comedy that need not be overlooked when assessing the value of the current British product. We can certainly stand more of him.

LAUREL and Hardy have departed from their usual style in their new full-length film *Swiss Miss*. The antics of the two are woven into a musical comedy background. There is a slight plot which allows for the entrances and exits of the comedians and serves the useful purpose of providing sets, characters and chorus. Otherwise the plot is of practically no importance or interest. I say 'practically' because I wish to make an exception in the case of Eric Blore, although his genius has not been used to the fullest advantage.

Laurel and Hardy and their producers seem to have had a hard time deciding whether the feature-length film was a fit vehicle. *Swiss Miss* appears to be a fresh attempt at solving this problem, but it is not nearly such a successful effort as *Way Out West*.

Several of the individual episodes are as good as any that have appeared in the Laurel and Hardy films. There is a mousetrap demonstration when Laurel bores holes in the floor of a cheese factory and accidentally opens up a gas main. The holes, of course, are for the non-existent mice. Unfortunately Laurel sets the gas alight and flames use the exits provided by the mouseholes—to the detriment of Hardy's pants. The flames are driven back and each hole carefully corked up. But there is the inevitable disaster when all the corks blow out at once.

Laurel is given the stage to himself in a magnificent sequence when he tries to rob a St. Bernard dog of the case of brandy he carries round his neck. After many efforts to persuade the reluctant dog to part with the brandy he fakes a snow storm with chicken feathers. The dog comes dutifully to the rescue, and Laurel becomes gloriously drunk. In this condition he joins Hardy in transporting a piano across a swinging bridge to a mountain-top chalet. The terrors of the crossing are intensified by the sudden appearance of an enormous monkey. Disaster is again inevitable. The piano and the monkey are hurled into the ravine as the bridge collapses, while Laurel and Hardy save themselves in the clumsiest manner possible.

These are but samples of episodes which are carefully distributed throughout the film. The intervals between are neither long nor particularly tedious, but I would like to make a strong protest as I prefer my Laurel-and-Hardy neat. The intervals appear to me useless padding, for one thing; old-fashioned technique, for another.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by

H. E. BLYTH

The Adventures of Robin Hood

(Michael Curtiz and William Keighley—Warner Brothers.)
Errol Flynn, Basil Rathbone, Claude Rains, Ian Hunter, Olivia de Havilland.

There are certain essentials that must be found in any story of Robin Hood if the teller expects to be heard. The thickets must be bright with spring, the forest must be large and indeed illimitable, the deer must run, there must be bows and arrows, and Robin himself must be conducting a one-man revolution against iniquitous sheriffs, bishops and prince-regents. The last of these features is doubtless the quintessential one. The setting can vary with the episodes, but Robin cannot cease from the fight he wages—he and his merry band—against gold braid and money bags.

Warner Brothers have put everything into *The Adventures of Robin Hood* that was necessary, and a few more things for good luck. The forest of the film is perhaps a shade too pretty, what with technicolor and all; the people, both of low and of high degree, look as clean as a Newport picnic crowd; and the costumes of the nobles, whether in a great hall or among the mighty trunks of oaks and beeches, have an unvarying splendour at which the eye loses strength at last to gaze. There will, of course, be a difference of opinion on this point; nor am I denying that *The Adventures of Robin Hood* is one of the prettiest things I have ever watched. To my taste, however, it has been overpolished, and it is too clean. Hollywood can learn something from Europe about the convincingness of a little disarray, a little honest disorder. I remember, for example, a Czechoslovakian film of more than a year ago which handled the Robin Hood theme with no prettiness at all.

Janosik pushed on, to be sure, to a tragic conclusion; the hero, captured and condemned to die by impalement, leapt against the hook as he finished a wild song of freedom. But that is irrelevant to my point, which is that the background everywhere was trying to be veritable, and succeeding because nothing real had been removed from the camera's vision. Warner Brothers have swept their forest till it is as neat as a nut; the roadways look like bridle-paths; and many of the merry men bring the air of the costume chamber with them to the picked trees they will climb.

Janosik conducted its one-man revolution also in a more plausible spirit. The audience never forgot that the hero was in great and indeed terrible danger. If *The Adventures of Robin Hood* arouses no anxiety in its spectators, the excuse might be that it is comedy whereas *Janosik* was tragedy. But Errol Flynn is perhaps too obviously safe at all times—even in a great hall full of nobles he has only to hack his way out or to push convenient tables in front of giants in red robes coming to crush him. At the gallows, in the greenwood, or fencing for his life with Sir Guy of Gisborne (Basil Rathbone), he has luck too visibly with him, he too plainly cannot lose. This means that the essential theme tends to disappear among a series of gay episodes—not quite as gay, either, as they would have been had Douglas Fairbanks returned to clown the fable. For Errol Flynn is not trying to be Douglas Fairbanks; he is trying to be romantic; and I think he would have been more so had he been able to make us catch our breath two or three times.

"One of the prettiest things . . ."

But the film is better than I have said. It is really charming; Claude Rains is an accomplished Prince John; and the recognition of King Richard (Ian Hunter) by Robin Hood is a great moment. *Robin Hood* has a whole summer before it, and I do not doubt that it will beautify the green season.

—Mark Van Doren, *The Nation*

Odd what makes a picture. The marquee glares with the names of Olivia de Havilland, Errol Flynn, Claude Rains, Basil Rathbone and nowhere will you find a two inch credit for the colour. This film would be dull, flat, and I'm sure unprofitable but for the work of one Carl Jules Weyle—if I've got the right man. He's listed as art director. For it is only the brilliant, amazingly versatile use of colour that puts suspense and excitement into *Robin Hood*. One is led from scene to scene wondering what new splash of tint and texture will be revealed, instead of wondering whether Robin will be captured. Not since that first great splurge, *Becky Sharpe*, has Technicolor been used to such effect. And this has twenty memorable colour compositions, for every one in *Becky Sharp*.

—Meyer Levin, *Esquire*

A Slight Case of Murder

(Lloyd Bacon—First National)
Edward G. Robinson, Allen Jenkins, Ruth Donnelly.

Accepting the hypothesis of the cheapness and unimportance of human life among racketeers, it is right and proper that nothing but fun is extracted from the corpses of four poker-playing bandits; but only with such a background is that possible. First, how they are shot, and next, how the bodies are disposed of, form the basis of this really amusing fantasy, where the stage attains a degree of acceptable unreality beyond any of the Restoration plays of which Lamb wrote. The whole company throws itself into the spirit of this deplorable embroilment, from the four men so slightly murdered, and their murderer, to that paragon of dignity and virtue Mr. Whitewood. But best of all is Robinson, as Marco the beer baron.

—E. V. L., *Punch*

The evolution of the thriller and gangster-drama is surely one of the most curious manifestations of public taste in entertainment. Time was when the murder, without which no thriller is complete, raised a shudder, and even wholesale killings seemed grim. We have altered all that. Corpses nowadays are comic, and dying men a joke. I find it difficult to control an old-fashioned squeamishness when it comes to carting dead men about like sacks of potatoes, and laughing at death. Yet *A Slight Case of Murder*, based on a play by Damon Runyon and Howard Lindsay, is,

on the whole, a very funny combination of the thriller and the gangster-play, and Edward G. Robinson as a beer baron, doing his best to be "legitimate" after the repeal of Prohibition laws, dominates the complicated and hectic action with a grand study of a rogue trying to be respectable. This murder-thriller-gangster farce contains a great deal of ingenuity, of entertaining characterisation, and hilarious situations.

—Michael Orme, *The Sketch*

Three Comrades

(Frank Borzage—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Robert Taylor, Franchot Tone, Robert Young, Margaret Sullavan

Remarque's story of the three German war veterans who sought to find again the way to peace, and of the tubercular girl who loved one of them and died gallantly as their love was cresting, had, of course, the stuff of a gossamer tragedy. Its literary translation to the screen preserved the novel's spirit admirably. The players, beginning with Margaret Sullavan as the frail but dauntless Pat, through Franchot Tone's sincere and strong portrait of Otto and Robert Young's facile playing of the idealistic Gottfried, to Robert Taylor's actually quite acceptable Erich (either Mr. Taylor is improving or we are losing our grip)—the players, again, are remarkably right. But still it must be counted Mr. Borzage's picture. For he has interwoven its materials so deftly, has marshalled his players so capably, has used his cameras, lights and sets so persuasively that the film is all unity—a poetic, poignant, heart-breaking whole.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

Three Comrades is a version of Remarque's study of post-war Germany. Three war-time pals stick together in the peace, run a garage, and make friends with a gay but very frail girl, who marries one of them and shortly afterwards dies in a sanatorium. Frank Borzage would, I believe, have made a fine thing out of this study of social unrest had he not been defeated by the uncompromising Americanism of his cast. Not for a moment, in spite of tinkling folk-songs and a café-proprietor stuffed with *Stimmung*, do they contrive to suggest Germany; but Margaret Sullavan and Franchot Tone play with such quiet sincerity that while they are on the screen the film comes to life. With the appearance of Robert Taylor it quickly dies again; he seems, at any rate in this film, to have no conception of character at all; it is just Lee Sheridan all over again. When he was engaged to play in it, the film should have been renamed *A Yank at the Tankstelle.*

—Peter Galway, *The New Statesman and Nation*

Critical Summary

This is just the kind of film that splits critical opinion. The sentimentalist weeps, the cynic sneers, while the green intellectual discovers in a few inches of the film the point of a lifetime. But whoever is justified in his attitude, all will combine in their attack upon the director; the sentimentalist because of the unhappy ending which puts an end to the osculatory display between Mr. Robert Taylor and Miss Margaret Sullavan; the cynic because the man of the world (Mr. Franchot Tone) is allowed to become a man of another and a more romantic one; and the green intellectual because the few inches of ill-digested thought have not been turned into the standard length by which he can judge all successors. The man in a bowler hat, with pince-nez and umbrella, will pay his half-crown, weep, sneer, and talk philosophy when he gets home.

W.F.N. Selection

North Sea	*	*	*
The River	*	*	*
A Slight Case of Murder	*	*	*
Design for Living	*	*	
Yellow Jack	*		
A Farewell to Arms	*		

Other Films covered in this issue:

The Adventures of Robin Hood (stars reserved)

The Private Life of Henry VIII

Professor Beware

Thank Evans

Swiss Miss

Three Comrades

Port of Seven Seas

Joy of Living

You and Me

Women are Like That

The Thirteen

Orage

L'homme du Jour

Port of Seven Seas

(James Whale—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Wallace Beery, Frank Morgan, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Beal.

A fine play frequently becomes an unworthy film. A sad example of this occasional corruption of excellent dramatic matter may be seen in *Port of Seven Seas.* Some few years ago a distinguished French playwright, Marcel Pagnol, wrote a series of plays around the Port of Marseilles. They were notable for the fidelity of atmosphere they achieved and for the creation of certain character types only to be found in that particular place, in that especial country and at that precise moment. "Marius," "Fanny" and "César" achieved, between them, something beyond the wit of Hollywood to provide, that lovely gift bestowed so generously upon the French film industry—viz., Truth. *Port of Seven Seas* is the saddening failure of falsity.

This simple and heartbreaking story, in itself quite credible and touching, becomes a jumble of transatlantic sentiment and of crude playing on the heartstrings. Wallace Beery and Frank Morgan are both fiercely determined to earn their salaries; only the actor who plays Marius, Mr. John Beal, touches anything like the root of the matter.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

It may be suspected that in the play by M. Marcel Pagnol, from which the film is derived, the plot was merely the pretext for some typical sketches of French family life. Such sketches might readily have lent themselves to French acting, but, as with so many American films based on French plays, the acting proves to be unsuited to the material. The plot is of the simplest—it tells of a young man's passion for the sea and the misfortune which befell the girl to whom he was betrothed. With American treatment, however, there appears to be insufficient light and shade, and the outlines take on an unnatural hardness. The scenes in the Marseilles café between the father of the young man and the old chandler, who lends the respectability of his name to the girl's illegitimate child, miss the light vivacity which is one of the secrets of French acting. Mr. Wallace Beery, without the adroit gestures and expressive silences which the part of the young man's father seems to require, falls into sentimentality, while Mr. Frank Morgan also allows falsity to creep into the eloquence of the friendly chandler. The scenes on the waterfront are well organised and photographed.

—*The Times*

Joy of Living

(Tay Garnett—R.K.O. Radio)
Irene Dunne, Douglas Fairbanks, Jnr.

Another of those loony shows, with Irene Dunne playing a hard-working, family ridden prima donna of the stage, and Douglas Fairbanks, Jnr., playing a philosophical gay blade who tries to save her from herself. Like most of the current comedies, it has scenes that are funny and good. Also like most of them, it lacks punch as comic entity. Miss Dunne, as in *The Awful Truth*, is delightfully giddy as the heroine. Fairbanks is arrogant when he should be sympathetic, ill-at-ease when he should be clownish. He sounds and acts a great deal like Ronald Colman five-eighths of the time, which may account for this. The beer-garden and roller-skating sequences are best for all-round laughs. *Good fun.* —*Stage*

"Screenplay by Gene Towne, Graham Baker, and Allan Scott based on an original story by Dorothy and Herbert Fields." Frankly, between the five of them, we feel that somebody might have produced an idea.

Joy of Living—cont.

Miss Irene Dunne is a talented and versatile actress with a fine sense of comedy and burlesque and a pleasant singing voice; so when it comes to writing a story for her, an especial effort should be made. But Messrs. Towne, Baker, Scott and Fields have between them failed to produce a real plot, and not even the co-operation of Miss Dorothy has saved the day. Somebody, in a moment of inspiration, thought of giving Miss Dunne a drunk scene admittedly, but then that isn't really so very original; the fact that it is highly entertaining is entirely due to Miss Dunne, who hiccups with more glamour than any one we can ever remember having seen previously. Chief honours must go to Mr. Jerome Kern (lyries by Miss Dorothy Fields, who evidently pulled her weight), and it is Mr. Kern's music that saves this picture from being, at times, perilously near to boring—and that is a hard thing to say in connection with Miss Dunne.

—H. E. Blyth, *World Film News*

A Farewell to Arms

(Frank Borzage—Paramount) (Revival)
Gary Cooper, Helen Hayes.

As one might have expected there is no very close relation between this film and Mr. Ernest Hemingway's novel, although the main progress of the story is kept intact. But it sometimes provides an ingenious equivalent for Mr. Hemingway's special qualities, and, almost to the end, preserves something of that admirable detachment which allows him to describe the most difficult emotions. Like so many other old films which have recently been revived, it wears remarkably well, and it is interesting to compare Mr. Frank Borzage's restrained and purposeful handling of this story with his fumbling approach to sentiment in the most recent example of his work, *Three Comrades*. There is sentiment in *A Farewell to Arms*, but it is sentiment which fulfils its purpose by demonstrating the terrible futility of war. There is no actual climax; the grim inevitability of catastrophe is inexorably conveyed. The alterations in the plot, many of which have obviously been made in the interests of speed, occasionally bring in a touch of melodrama, and if there are obscurities it is no doubt the censor, rather than the director, who is to blame. Mr. Hemingway's unemphatic irony is only momentarily apparent, but Mr. Borzage could hardly have been expected to discover in the film a medium so readily adaptable to irony, emphatic or unemphatic, as the written word. Mr. Gary Cooper and Miss Helen Hayes are careful not to give to the parts of the soldier and the nurse their own extraneous observations, and they both make a gallant, though unsuccessful attempt to endow their parts with that curious subdued patter which was the medium through which the author controlled the emotions of his characters. The strong physical flavour of the book is curiously absent, but this is not altogether a serious disadvantage.

—*The Times*

You and Me

(Fritz Lang—Paramount)
Sylvia Sidney, George Raft.

I don't think there has ever been another picture like *You and Me*. This is not an exclamation of unqualified approval, however: I merely mean that *You and Me* is the weirdest cinematic hash I ever saw. To describe it as simply as possible, it is a naïve morality play with impressionistic Teutonic overtones by Fritz Lang and Kurt Weill. The lesson we learn from *You and Me* is that crime does not pay. This is brought home to us, not by any such relatively indirect means as showing a criminal coming to a bad end, but by a chalk talk (exactly that—a lecture at a blackboard) in which Sylvia Sidney proves to an abashed group of thugs surprised *flagrante delicto* that the financial return to them from a theft of thirty thousand dollars' worth of goods is one hundred and thirteen dollars and some odd cents. They reform. Parole violation is dealt with at length in *You and Me*. George Raft and Miss Sidney are both paroled convicts who get into simply awful trouble because they marry. Fritz Lang has whipped up a couple of eerie little episodes dealing in a vague way with crime and punishment, but totally unrelated to the pedestrian plot which keeps Miss Sidney and Mr. Raft so busy.

—Russell Maloney, *The New Yorker*

American critics in general slammed this production, but I think it is a fine effort, full of human insight and cinematic quality. Mr. Lang's theme is that crime doesn't pay, neither in a moral nor monetary sense. His background is a big store, the proprietor of which takes ex-convicts as assistants, to give them a new start. Two of them marry. The man tells the girl about his past, but she doesn't tell him about hers, and from that poignant situation Mr. Lang spins a narrative of shrewd suspense and keen crisis, heightened here and there with those touches of symbolical sound and imagery in which he excels. A little pretentious at times, perhaps, but the emotions ring true, especially when they are in the care of Vera Gordon, superb aetress too infrequently seen in these days. Even Sylvia Sidney forgets her mincing manner, and George Raft acts with a simple directness that wins sympathy from the start.

The bunch of ex-convicts are gems of characterisation, especially one who shows a customer how a patent tin-opener works and uses the technique of a safe-breaker to do it! There is a sub-plot to the effect that women marry only rotters or weaklings, but we won't go into that. It may be too true.

—G. A. Atkinson, *The Sunday Referee*

"No conception of character at all . . ."

Women Are Like That

(Stanley Logan—First National)
Kay Francis, Pat O'Brien.

Women Are Like That discusses the place of feminine intuition in business, the problems of an advertising agency, the claims of home life, the jealousy of husbands, the snare of independence, and this and that aspect of careers for women. Miss Kay Francis and Mr. Pat O'Brien are the principal speakers, and the motion for love is carried *nem. con.*

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

All the characters in this film work in an advertising agency, but unfortunately this is no more than a background for their quarrels and love-affairs, and for a story about a husband and wife (Mr. Pat O'Brien and Miss Kay Francis) who are each in turn mortified when the other succeeds in business. There is, in fact, only just enough about their occupation to show what an amusing film this might have been, if it had told us more about advertising and in a more satirical vein. As it is the plot is reasonably neat and the hysteria of the chief characters well described, but perhaps the most amusing incident is an unscrupulous competition between husband and wife for a contract. But even here, and in one or two similar incidents, the ordinary manœuvres of commercial competition are grossly exaggerated in the interests of entertainment. One has the impression that the story has been worked out by people who know their subject but have been afraid of producing what would surely have been much better entertainment—a documentary film.

—*The Times*

Design for Living

(Ernst Lubitsch—Paramount) (Revival)
Fredric March, Gary Cooper, Miriam Hopkins, Edward Everett Horton.

Noel Coward wrote this comedy about two men and a girl. The polyandric theme was too much for the English censor of stage productions, so we never saw Coward's play here. But when Ben Hecht had broadened it in the writing and Lubitsch had added his subtleties in direction it became permissible in the cinema. This is rather strange, for the inescapable point, rewrite it how you will, is that a girl loves two men who are close friends, walks out on both when the fight starts, marries elsewhere, and in the end they all decide to resume the threesome formation. It is the most tenuous of themes, but Lubitsch and Hecht make it all very amusing. From the audience's point of view it becomes very difficult (and rightly) to take sides because the men are Gary Cooper and Fredric March. The poor (?) girl is Miriam Hopkins. As entertainment to-day I would bracket it with the latest Lubitsch, *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, with extra marks for dialogue.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

It is, of course, a sophisticated comedy in which Gary Cooper, Fredric March and Miriam Hopkins, playing the rôles of Bohemians, try to solve a sex problem of two boys and one girl by means of "a gentleman's agreement"—with Edward Everett Horton to prove that the solution is not a bad idea when viewed comparatively. The acting is excellent and the dialogue as gay and pointed to-day as it was when it was first made. How much of it is the original Noel Coward and how much was written in during the adaptation I do not know, but I do know that the standard throughout is good enough to be distinguished as Coward's best. Lubitsch, of course, directed it and gave it a delicate flippancy, and a smooth pace with great polish.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

Critical Summary.

Any true estimate of Mr. Noel Coward is obviously a venturesome proceeding at this stage, for Mr. Noel Coward still sharpens his wit on the absurdities and not on the cruelly fallacious. He enters the stately homes of England with a latchkey of his own manufacture, and dusts the characters of yesterday with the cheaply cynical brush of to-day. His wit may sparkle but it seldom illumines, and though the fluidity of the screen glosses over the defects of his imagination and the paucity of his ideas, the natural progression of his talent may well be arrested before it has become valuable.

Private Life of Henry VIII

(Alexander Korda—London Films) (Revival)
Charles Laughton, Robert Donat, Binnie Barnes, Wendy Barrie, Elsa Lanchester.

I always thought that *The Private Life of Henry VIII* was overpraised. Having seen the film again I withdraw that opinion. It is a far better picture than *La Kermesse Héroïque*. Its humour is broad and vulgar, its settings are beautiful and its script is a piece of excellent writing. It was a firm foundation on which Alexander Korda was to build London Films. In this film you see the screen beginnings of Robert Donat, Binnie Barnes, Merle Oberon, Wendy Barrie, Judy Kelly, Elsa Lanchester, and realise the soundness of Korda's judgment. I was curious to see them all again, but I remained to enjoy a picture as entertaining now as it was five years ago. I had forgotten Ann of Cleves among the sunflowers, and the card game on the royal wedding night, Henry's vigil as Katheryn Howard faced the headsman, and Lady Tree's portrait of the old nurse. I had forgotten, also, the ending, when Charles Laughton, beady-eyed, parchment-faced, nibbles a chicken bone and looking directly at the camera says "Six wives and the best is the worst."

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

The Thirteen

(Michael Romm—Russian)
I. Novoseltsev, Kuzmina, A. Chistyakov, A. Feit, I. Kutnetsov.

In recent years the Russian film has tended to turn away from blatant propaganda and, in this film, its urgent message of co-operative service is expressed in terms which even the pacifist may well applaud. The co-operative service spreads its ideals over all departments of Russian life. Here it is not the fortitude of the proletariat but the calm endurance of the soldier that makes this study in heroism impressive. Across the Central Asian desert come not the invading capitalist but ten men bound for civil life after having guarded their frontier in the uniform of the Red Army. The ten men, who are joined by a geologist, a neighbour commander and his wife, never suggest that they have been chosen for their "photogenic" qualities; yet their faces are arresting in their individual expressions. We know them as men as soon as they appear, and the subsequent development of the plot, which imprisons them in a fort, not through monarchial decree but through their own humanitarian impulse to rid their country of banditry, merciless in its predatory raids, is unfolded with care and precision. The odds are great and the survival of only one man to relate the calm heroism of the defenders is no dramatic overture but a simple testimony to a service which needs no propaganda for recruits.

—Anon, *World Film News*

Orage

(Marc Allegret—French)
Charles Boyer, Michèle Morgan.

Orage is just a study of love, delirious, unhappy love, between a girl and a married man thrown together somewhere in the French countryside. Beautifully played by Michèle Morgan and Charles Boyer, it turns out to be one of the season's most haunting pictures. The love scenes give you a guilty sense that you are spying on something secret. The man's bewitched passion for the girl, and, at the same time, his odd tenderness for his wife are delicately and movingly done. From beginning to end there is not one moment of strain; the thing is as inevitable as the opening and fading of a rose. See it, please. It is one of those rare, personal experiences in the cinema that are altogether too good to miss.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

L'homme du Jour

(Julien Duvivier—French)
Maurice Chevalier, Elvire Popesco, Alerme.

M. Duvivier, who gave us the brilliant *Pépé Le Moko*, now gives us *L'homme du Jour*, a comparatively slight but intensely Parisian little tale of an electrician who gave a blood-transfusion to a famous actress and so became Front Page News for a couple of days. This, of course, proved fatal for the type of swaggering young man so well played by M. Maurice Chevalier. He lost his job in the hope of becoming an actor, and lost or nearly lost his sweetheart who had been stricken by a similar ambition. I should like to praise this plain, appealing little girl's performance, and still more the brilliantly absurd portrait of a famous actress who looks and behaves like a youngish and ravishing mixture of Bernhardt, Cécile Sorel, and Mistinguette, spouts fervent Racine, and prattles deliriously when she comes out of her anæsthesia of having slept between Shakespeare and Goethe.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

L'homme du Jour seems to me a minor Duvivier, just a good sketch, hardly more, of what this really great director can do for us. M. Chevalier is the man of the day, a theatre electrician who saves the life of a front-page star and becomes, for his golden hour, the Wonder Hero of the Boulevards. The film has a faint bitter-sweet quality, like a well-mixed gin-and-lime, and pleasant fancies, such as the scene in which M. Chevalier, the electrician, calls on M. Chevalier, the actor, in his dressing-room and sings "Prosper" with him to the voice of M. Chevalier on a gramophone record. I don't think M. Chevalier is quite the subtlest film actor Duvivier has ever handled, and I don't think M. Duvivier is quite at his happiest when dealing with the life of the theatre, but all the common, everyday things are nicely done, and most of the little people, the flower girl, and the boarders, and the Paris workmen are vigorously alive and true.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary.

Like the present Australian Test team now in England, the French team of directors is getting all the publicity, and no player or director seems capable of letting his side down. M. Julien Duvivier may be said to be the McCabe of the French team, a stylist who can make his nonchalant hundred or content himself with a modest 28. In "L'homme du Jour" it is the low score that the spectator sees on the board, but the celluloid runs have been sparklingly compiled. M. Chevalier has returned to the team and the French wickets are less sticky than those of Hollywood.

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North Sea

PRODUCTION: G.P.O. Film Unit
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCER: A. Cavalcanti
DIRECTOR: Harry Watt, A.R.F.P.
PHOTOGRAPHY: Fowle and Jones

North Sea is a distinct advance on anything of the kind we have seen in this type of film.

It tells the story of the work done by the Post Office radio stations around the coast in looking after our shipping, and the radio workers and fishermen who appear are shown at the tasks which occupy them every day. No professional actors or actresses were employed.

Hitherto documentaries have been films with commentaries to explain them. This one explains itself and gives a thrilling picture of one of the thousands of dramas that go on in everyday life. —*The Star*

I can only give you a pale equivalent in words of the thrill of this picture, which gets its drama from bare unadornment, from sheer fact clearly stated. It is only fair to add, though, that much of the charm comes from the sound of the Scottish voices, which supply that touch of romance, of strangeness, that one aches for at times in documentaries. It has sometimes seemed to me the weakness of English realist pictures that, with all their honesty, they are a little afraid of beauty. It is a form of self-consciousness that has kept us out of the front rank of many arts, and it alarms me to see its hold on the better makers of our cinema. Fine words are not sentimental, and can only add to the stature of the speaker. We shall never be a first-class film-making country until we dare to be fine.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Nothing more interesting has ever been shown than this vivid narrative plucked from the heart of deep-sea fishery, with the stamp of authenticity in every foot.

It speaks for itself in the most thrilling pictorial sense of the term.

—*Sunday Referee*

Sincere compliments to the G.P.O. Film Unit for their vivid little documentary *North Sea*. For this especial sort of short, telling the story as it does of the Post Office radio stations without the help of a single professional actor, no praise can be high enough. It is a tale of the common enough discharge of responsible duties under trying conditions, and is far more satisfactory to watch than many an invented narrative.

—*The Sunday Times*

An outstanding instance of the documentary film, the subject is cordially recommended as a worthy addition to any bill.

—*To-day's Cinema*

North Sea may well claim to be considered as the most progressive step in documentary films since Mr. Basil Wright, Mr. Harry Watt, and M. Cavalcanti made their by now famous picture of the Postal Service, *Night Mail*, in 1936. But it would be wrong to estimate *North Sea* in terms of the documentary film alone. By its fictional story as well as by its characterization, and in spite of its relatively small cost of production, it claims to be measured against the story-films of the studios. Its place of showing should be the cinemas and not the lecture halls of the country. —*The Times*

North Sea is easily the best thing the G.P.O. Film Unit have so far done, it is a simple thirty-minute documentary describing life on a deep sea trawler from Aberdeen. But into the pictures of sea, land and sky, Alberto Cavalcanti, the producer, has caught a harsh and rugged beauty of a sort that more sophisticated cameras range the world for. To all who love the sea and the uncomplaining men who go down to her in ships, this film will make an undeniable appeal.

—*Time and Tide*

By filming *You and Me* Fritz Lang has, we are told, made a "powerful and thought-provoking drama". But its shallowness is shown up by a picture which is in the same programme—the noble *North Sea*. This is the film produced by Cavalcanti for the G.P.O., which tells how ship-to-shore radio safeguards the lives of North Sea fishermen. It uses the gale of February, 1937, to supply the incident from which great drama is made. *North Sea* has greatness by virtue of its worthy handling of fine material, and in this three-reel film may be found the essentials of a work of art.

—R. H., *The Manchester Guardian*

It is, in fact, a vivid little everyday drama of the perils of the deep, photographed in mountainous seas at real risk, and revealing the modest courage and humour of fishermen, with an insight into the valuable use of shore radio. A magnificent documentary. One touch of fiction would have ruined it. My only carp is that the shots of heavy seas are cut too short; I had no time to get my optical sea-legs. —*Daily Herald*

The River

PRODUCTION: U.S. Farm Security Administration
DISTRIBUTION: Unity Films
DIRECTOR: Pare Lorentz
PHOTOGRAPHY: Stacy Woodard, Floyd Crosby, Willard Van Dyke
NARRATION: Written by Pare Lorentz Spoken by Thomas Chalmers

The River presents to us in unforgettable terms the size, the beauty and the problems of the Mississippi. It forms a powerful indictment of laisser-faire, even in the field of pioneer development. We are shown the great cities built along the river banks, heedlessly and "at what a cost", as the commentator continually repeats. The top-soil of the greatest valley in the world was carelessly squandered; "we have taken the top off the Alleghenies, and sent it down to the Gulf of Mexico". *The River* uses an extension of March of Time technique to explain the causes and cure of erosion and floods; but what captivates us is the pictorial beauty of these long low horizons and enormous expanses of swirling water. The floods are so wonderfully photographed that it is difficult to remember that they were no spectacle, but a gigantic national disaster. The film, which is shown free all over America, was made by Pare Lorentz.

—*The New Statesman and Nation*

This is a documentary film issued by the Government of the U.S.A. and perhaps one of the most dramatic pictures which the screen has ever shown. It is the story of the Mississippi which collects into itself two-thirds of all the rivers in the United States before it empties into the Gulf of Mexico . . . and it is the story of exploitation and ruin. . . . "One hundred cities and a thousand towns" were built out of the ruthless profits of those who cleared the hills of timber and the earth of its richness but "at what a cost". Millions of tons of soil, the richest in the world, swept into the Gulf of Mexico, for the forests which held back and grew upon its waters were not; the natural restraints had been removed. —*The Weekly Review*

The River well deserves the chorus of praise evoked by its private showing. Here, again, drama and the human note transform a documentary subject into gripping entertainment. This Pare Lorentz picture tells the story of the Mississippi, of the cotton fields along its banks, and the timber on its upper reaches. Warm, flood and axe have turned field and forest into arid wastes, and the accumulating waters, with neither soil nor root to absorb them, swell the mighty river until thousands of miles of "levees" are constantly crumbling. The harnessing of the river and the subjugation of its power may be a problem more vital to the American than to the British public, but the whole picture has a dramatic urgency and a pictorial splendour that are of universal appeal. Sound is admirably used to heighten its drama, and a finely written commentary catches the rhythm of the rushing waters. —*The Sketch*

The film runs for barely half an hour, and Lorentz, I think, might well have allowed himself rather longer for the story covering so broad a sweep of time and space. But if his treatment is at some times so sketchy, he gets over some unforgettably graphic impressions of human effects struggling with natural forces, and his commentary is exceptionally good—not merely a description but rather the voice of the film itself made audible. *The River* is less humanly vivid than *North Sea*, but in its own way hardly less moving.

—*The Yorkshire Post*

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Basil Clavering writes on

MOVIE THEATRE MANAGEMENT

OBVIOUSLY, Mr. Ricketson, in setting out to write his "Management of Motion Picture Theatres" (McGraw Hill Book Co., 21*s*.), had in mind a momentous work, an "Encyclopædia Motionpictaticus", if one may coin a phrase.

It is no mean compliment to him that he has shrunk his work into 376 pages, excluding the covers.

He sails airily and succinctly through page after page, showing how a Cinema should be run; showing how films should be booked; showing how the staff should be managed; and giving a complete synopsis, from A to Z, of every conceivable query, and, at one point, daring to suggest that the Exhibitor might offer less than 50 per cent. and get away with it.

Much of the matter will be foreign to the Picture Theatre Manager in this country. Here, we are not concerned with Block Booking, nor do we have Complimentary Tickets with a blatant "For Police Protection" printed on them. Here, also, we are blessed with such institutions as the London County Council, which, although admittedly slower than the proverbial tortoise, at least hatches an excellent set of rules and regulations, which is more than Mr. Ricketson would have us believe they possess in the United States.

The most refreshing paragraph appears on page 125, which states: "The Manager is the sole judge of the programme make-up. It is his privilege and right to eliminate anything from the feature or short subjects which appears objectionable, or which does not have entertainment value." The writer of this review has several times attempted this, only to have the Renter screaming down the telephone as to why his film has been mutilated. It has been useless to explain that we were attempting to improve a picture that was never anything else but mutilated.

We are given an enlightening glimpse of showmanship in America, especially as to such stunts as lotteries, which, unfortunately, are not allowed in a country which paradoxically allows betting on horses. But Mr. Ricketson is too set on his rules of programme presentation. Practice has proved that the way to whip an audience to attention is not to present a programme week after week, in a 1, 2, 3—Short—Newsreel—Feature order. Has Mr. Ricketson ever put an interesting announcement in the middle of his newsreel and watched the result?

It is pleasant to note that where the cost is justified, he considers it a better plan to have a trailer made, without pictures, for the next week's feature for each individual theatre. Who has not been nauseated at those sickening trailers that splash "Terrific"—"Tremendous"—"Gigantic" at all angles across the screen, just as the heroine is about to bite off the hero's ear?

"One picture is worth a thousand words", is a phrase which came from China centuries ago and which is still as true as ever;—but put the pictures on the front of the house and the mob will come in to see them come to life.

This book deals crisply and to the point with every conceivable question that can possibly crop up, including: leases, colour and lighting effects, theatre inspection, auditing and accounting, equipment, inventories, architecture, and even dissertates upon the psychological effects of various coloured posters upon various people; finishing up with a list of film-world slang and definitions, such as: "Whodunit", a critic's slang expression for a mystery film; a "Winchellism".

This volume should be a valued addition to the library of every showman in the country, because it tells him how to obtain every penny from would-be patrons, and, seemingly, the author has put his theories into practice and found them good.

The price of the book is 21*s*., which is a lot of shillings, but it is extremely good value.

(*Continued at foot of next column.*)

Worthwhile Amateur Films at The Edinburgh Film Festival

COMPETITIONS for amateur film producers grow in number year by year. They offer prizes for the best film, the most outstanding film, the best colour film, the best photoplay, and so on. No doubt they have done much to encourage all the technical virtues of careful production, but have they done anything to guide amateurs in the choice of themes and subjects or to encourage them in the braveries of experiment?

With the latest resources of stock, cameras and equipment amateurs are now on an equal footing with the professionals. In colour work, in fact, they actually have the advantage. And to the amateurs, credit let it be said that the best of them are turning out work not far short of commercial cinema standard.

But what are they doing with their fine photography and slick cutting?

Remembering the creaking dramas and pathetic comedies of only a few years ago, it is gratifying to note the very considerable number of amateurs who are now turning to realism and documentary. A vast amount of energy is wasted on composing symphonies of the sea and moods of nature, and too little expended on the tougher material of man and his work and his problems. At the same time many sub-standard producers are making films of first-rate social value. Numerous so-called documentaries are just pretty travel pictures, but most of them at least have the cameras pointed in the right direction.

We have been telling the amateurs for long enough what to do. The time has now come for guidance, encouragement and appreciation when a sound job of work is produced.

With this end in view the Edinburgh Film Guild, in collaboration with other interested societies, is organising an Amateur Film Festival, to be held in November, "to encourage amateur cinematographers to produce films not only with good technique but with worthwhile themes dealing with contemporary affairs."

The professional realist producers are doing wonders with their limited resources in presenting on the screen various aspects of everyday life and current affairs. As it should be, their efforts are on a broad national basis. To the amateur falls the opportunity to film the local and regional scene, to depict the daily problems and pleasures as they occur in his own neighbourhood, coloured and influenced by local custom and idiosyncrasy. The raciest and most richly human contributions to literature have mostly been regional in nature. It is only an odd chance which gives us commercially a film like *North Sea*, rich in local character. In cinema, only the amateurs, it seems, can afford to be regionalists.

The prize list of the Edinburgh Amateur Film Festival (seven diplomas, seven £5 notes, and two cups) aims at inducing the amateur to turn to local subjects for inspiration. There are, for instance, prizes for a film of Edinburgh, for a film dealing with any of the properties of the National Trust for Scotland, for a film dealing with Scottish recreation, and for documentary, industrial, propaganda, news or instructional films entered from the South-East of Scotland.

Other prizes are offered for films for church purposes, for colour, and for 9.5mm films. Further evidence of the practical nature of the Festival is the nature of the award presented by Michael Powell, director of *The Edge of the World*, who invites the maker of the best-all-round film to London to act as assistant on whatever film he may be making at the time. In addition the Alan Harper Cup will be awarded for the best example of Direction and Editing.

Competitors, either individuals or clubs, may submit any number of entries and the same film can qualify for a prize in more than one section.

The adjudicators will be Harry Watt, director of *North Sea* and *Night Mail*, Professor D. Talbot Rice of the Chair of Fine Art at Edinburgh University, and Alan Harper, the Scottish documentary producer. Entry forms and full particulars may be obtained from *J. E. Rocca, Hon. Secretary, Edinburgh Amateur Film Festival*, 135 *George Street, Edinburgh*, 2.

Norman Wilson

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—*Philip Jordan in the News Chronicle.*

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"The incidents are hewn out of the hard rock of the North : their poetry is Mr. Flaherty's."
—*Times Literary Supplement.*

"It makes fascinating reading—first-rate stuff of its kind."—*Yorkshire Post.*

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The MONTH'S RELEASES

THE most striking feature about the programmes this month is the very large number of re-issues which are playing throughout the country. There has never been such a dearth of new films, but there is consolation in the fact that the re-issues are for the most part excellent films. The situation has arisen through many causes, one of the chief being the slow and difficult passage of the Quota Act through Parliament and the resulting uneasiness. This caused nearly a complete stoppage of production in this country and influenced to a certain extent the flow of production in Hollywood. But it is interesting to have a chance of seeing some of these old films again. In general they are still very good. There are, for instance, five James Cagney films, *The Public Enemy*, *Winner Take All*, *Taxi*, *Picture Snatcher* and *Mayor of Hell*, which are typical examples of the hard-hitting gangster films of several years ago. Again in *Disraeli* we have a picture which put George Arliss in the front line of screen actors. *Frankenstein* which in its time was almost a household word, and *The Invisible Man* are others

"Taxi," with James Cagney

which can be seen for a second time. Watch also for the re-issue of some of the Rudolph Valentino epics.

Releases of new films this month are headed by an unpretentious, unheralded picture, *Owd Bob*. The film stars Will Fyffe in a story of an old Scottish farmer, unable to get on with his neighbours. He keeps a sheep farm and lives with his daughter and his dog Black Wull. A young farmer arrives in the district with a fine dog, Owd Bob and takes the adjoining farm. He falls for McAdam's daughter and in the local sheep trials, his dog defeats Black Wull. This makes old McAdam, who has bet all his money on his dog, bankrupt and to cap it his dog is found to be a killer and has to be shot. However the marriage of his daughter to the young farmer and a new pup bring the old man happiness in his declining years. The highpoints are the sheep dog trials, which are shown in dramatic form, and Will Fyffe, who excels in the role of an old Scottish farmer. Katharine Hepburn has thrown dignity to the winds in *Bringing up Baby*. The comedy is fast moving, Miss Hepburn proving herself a serious rival to Miss Lombard at her own crazy game. *Vessel of Wrath* is the first production of the Laughton-Pommer combination. Charles Laughton, as the rascally beachcomber, gives a performance in the true Laughton style, and is supported by Elsa Lanchester and Robert Newton, who turns in a first-class performance as the Governor of the Island unlucky enough to house Laughton. A number of musicals are out this month. The best of the bunch is *Hollywood Hotel* with a host of stars including Dick Powell, the late Ted Healy, Edgar Kennedy and Benny Goodman. The musical numbers are excellent of their kind, and the production is lavish.

Kicking the Moon Around, with Ambrose and his Orchestra, Evelyn Dall and Harry Richman, is probably the best musical to date from British studios, and well up to Hollywood standard in cast and production.

Sonja Henie's third picture *Happy Landing* has a tendency to introduce too much spectacle and too many diversions. Miss Henie, however, skates as delightfully as ever. Jessie Matthews stars in *Sailing Along*. Victor Saville's latest production is *South Riding*, starring Ralph Richardson. The film has a story more credible than most and herein lies its strength. It is acted and directed with taste, and is spoilt only by its ridiculous closing sequence. Joan Crawford appears in M.G.M.'s *Mannequin* with Spencer Tracy. The film has the old story of the poor girl marrying into high society, being disillusioned and finally returning to marry a boy of her own class. Not even the direction of Frank Borzage, and the acting of Spencer Tracy can lift this film out of the mediocre class. Another M.G.M. offering is *Arsène Lupin Returns*, a good mystery thriller with Melvyn Douglas in the title role. *The Baroness and the Butler*, co-starring Annabella and William Powell, has some good ideas for its story. A butler becomes a Member of Parliament in opposition to his master. The idea is good but there it ends. Wallace Beery appears in *Port of Seven Seas*, an adaptation of a well-known Marcel Pagnol story of the Marseilles water front. Beery does very well in a character created by Raimu, and the water front atmosphere is good. Shirley Temple is in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, which has very little relation to the Mary Pickford classic and little to commend it beyond the star's performance.

"Vessel of Wrath . . . "

AUGUST RELEASES

Owd Bob (Gainsborough)
DIRECTOR: Robert Stevenson
STARRING: Will Fyffe
Margaret Lockwood
John Loder
(Reviewed July)

Bringing Up Baby (R.K.O. Radio)
DIRECTOR: Howard Hawks
STARRING: Katharine Hepburn
Cary Grant
Charles Ruggles
(Reviewed May–June)

Vessel of Wrath (Mayflower)
DIRECTOR: Erich Pommer
STARRING: Charles Laughton
Elsa Lanchester
Tyrone Guthrie
Robert Newton
(Reviewed April)

Mannequin (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Frank Borsage
STARRING: Joan Crawford
Spencer Tracy
(Reviewed March)

Port of Seven Seas (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: James Whale
STARRING: Wallace Beery
Frank Morgan
Maureen O'Sullivan
John Beal
(Reviewed August)

REVIVALS

The Invisible Man (G.F.D.)
DIRECTOR: James Whale
STARRING: Claude Rains
Gloria Stuart

Frankenstein (G.F.D.)
DIRECTOR: James Whale
STARRING: Boris Karloff
Colin Clive

Mayor of Hell (Warner Brothers)
DIRECTOR: Archie L. Mayo
STARRING: James Cagney

Picture Snatcher (Warner Brothers)
DIRECTOR: Lloyd Bacon
STARRING: James Cagney

Winner Take All (Warner Brothers)
STARRING: James Cagney

Public Enemy (Warner Brothers)
STARRING: James Cagney

Taxi (Warner Brothers)
STARRING: James Cagney

News from the Native Quarter

Jon Hall, who starred opposite Dorothy Lamour in "Hurricane," is a champion swimmer and in 1926 won the Tahiti swimming championship.

On the island they call him "Terutevaegiai"—a quick way of saying "Young White God on Heaven's Highest Shelf."

—News Item

In the little-known Hollywood district of California, many similar titles have been conferred on the natives. For instance, there is an old aborigine, his face hideously disfigured by the old tribal custom of registering emotion, who is known among his people as "Osolousi"—a quick way of saying "Old White Elephant on Hollywood's Highest Shelf."

Sensational reports of the barbarous customs prevalent among these backward tribes are now filtering through to civilisation. Only the other day a well-known British author staggered into Wardour Street, wild-eyed and gibbering, with fantastic stories of the tortures he had suffered at their hands. He told of days, nay weeks, spent locked in a native hut and *forced to think*. The effort, he said, nearly cost him his sanity; the hut itself was primitive and rudely furnished, the floor being littered with *scenario* leaves. The *scenario*, he explained, is an evil-smelling fungoid growth which flourishes in the humid Hollywood swamplands.

He told, too, how one day he looked from his prison on to the clearing in the centre of the native camp, or *lot*. Here he actually saw young children exposed for long periods to the savage glare of the *kleig-light*. The initiation ceremony which the young men and maidens have to undergo before becoming members of the tribe is, it seems, even more barbarous. They are expected to assist nightly at fearful rites at a nearby drinking-hole, known to the natives as The Brown Bowler.

Otherwise, the intrepid traveller assured us, the natives are friendly, fond of dancing and light wines and childishly pleased by gifts of coloured beads or bromo-seltzer. He showed us a wad of the curious coinage used by natives, known as *dollas*. It appears that one or two of the tribal chiefs had insisted on his taking a plentiful supply of the money back home with him. "Show it around to your friends," were their parting words, half grave, half gay. "We're giving it away."

NATURE NOTES

Tom-tits have built a nest in the pocket of a waistcoat which is hanging in a garden at Romsey, Hampshire. Three eggs are being hatched.

—News Item

Rather lovable, don't you think? But, mind you, by no means unique.

There is a certain well-known British film magnate who has, since early in the year, been harbouring a nest of blackbirds in the gap between his pullover and the top of his trousers—"Smugglers Gap," as it was laughingly referred to by the shareholders.

It was a common sight in spring to see the male and female birds, obviously very much in love, flying back and forth with pieces of the studio in their beaks, to fashion them into the snug little nest in which they were to face life together. The contract department furnished them with many unwanted scraps of paper which the clever birds would weave into the structure of their new home.

By April all was ready and the feathered honeymooners moved into their new home and soon grew accustomed to their strange environment. It soon became known that Mr. and Mrs. Blackbird were expecting a happy event and imagine the delight of one and all when one morning the little nest was heavier by five of the loveliest speckled eggs you ever saw!

Helped on by the warmth of their surroundings the eggs soon hatched out and the baby blackbirds lost no time in announcing—in no uncertain voices— their arrival into the big, wonderful world. Alas, only four little strangers came to bless the nest as one egg had been broken when the magnate slapped his stomach laughing at one of his own jokes. "His first smash-hit in years," as one morbid onlooker observed.

Such was the twittering the little strangers set up that a number of newspaper men hurried to the scene, under the impression that the magnate was about to make his weekly announcement of the next season's line-up. Imagine their astonishment at finding four lovable little bundles of bald bird pecking at them through gaps in the magnate's pants!

Life goes on happily for the blackbird family in their strange home. "George and I will probably never move from here now," Mrs. Blackbird told me. "It is a little noisy at times and in warm weather the damp is apt to come through the walls, and we do not get on very well with some of the insects who are our neighbours. George wants to move to a better district, but I tell him that that is impossible until the children can fend for themselves."

She looked up proudly to where her young ones were romping happily in the magnate's

(*Continued at foot of col.* 3)

SNOOKS GRIESER TO WRITE FOR WORLD FILM NEWS!

Press Lord's Tribute

Commencing with the August issue, Snooks Grieser, *WFN*'s redundant lift-boy, is to contribute a monthly article on matters of universal interest. The feature will be called Snooks Grieser's Key-Hole Column.

He will probe into the hearts of the people.
He will probe into their pockets.
He will listen to their conversations.
He will get lynched, we hope.

But Grieser will go on—the champion of lost causes—the receiver of stolen goods—the carrier of contagious diseases. The Cinema, the Theatre, Literature, Personalities—no sphere of human activities will be safe from the attentions of the Boy Crusader. Grieser dips his pen in vitriol. Only a Post Office pen could stand it. Only *WFN* would dare to print it. Not even *WFN* are going to pay for it.

GRIESER HAS GUTS!
GRIESER HAS BREADTH!
GRIESER HAS BOILS!

Following upon the announcement of this —the greatest scoop in film journalism— came a shoal of congratulatory messages from prominent figures in Press circles. Lord Blatherskite writes: "The greatest step backwards in the history of journalism since the birth of the *Daily Mule*."

Other tributes are as follows:—

"My heart is too full for words."—*Godfrey Swoon.*

"My collar is too tight to express my feelings."—*Lord Wrestlecrosse.*

My Downfall—from Liftboy to Litterateur —the romantic life-story of Snooks Grieser's rise to fame—will be found on another page . . . if the police haven't torn it out.

---

hair. "I *do* wish the children wouldn't play there," she said. "One never knows *what* they may pick up." With that she asked to be excused and hurried away to reprove her eldest for pecking pieces out of the magnate's car. "Put that down at once, Albert," she ordered. "You don't know *where* it's been."

And what of the man himself who has given up so much of his time and his trousers to his feathered friends? "Rather than disturb the tiny creatures who have sought shelter from me," he said, wincing as a baby blackbird kicked him in the eye, "I have given up eating."

We caught the whimsical twist to his mouth as he said this and joined in his hearty laughter. He gave up eating years ago.

LORUM

CONVERSATION PIECE

"How about going to the movies to-night?"

"Good idea. Anything good on?"

"I don't know. Let's look in the local paper."

"I've got it here. Oh, it's this week's—it only gives next week's programme."

"Well, where's last week's?"

"Here it is. Let's see now—at the Odium there's *Chest Pilot* with Clark Able and Myrna Joy."

"That's rather good, isn't it?"

"Well, Charles saw it and didn't care for it very much."

"All right then, we won't go and see it."

"Oh, I don't know. You can't go by what old Charles says."

"Well, we may as well see what else is on before we make up our minds."

"Let's see—there's Messie Jatthews in *Wailing Along* at the Redundant."

"Oh, what a pity—I've seen that."

"Quite a film-fan, aren't you?"

"But honestly, I wouldn't mind seeing it again."

"Oh, you don't want to see it again if you've seen it once. I wonder what else is on. Ah, there's Katharine Hipbath in *Ringing up Abie* at the Colossus."

"Oh, don't let's go there. I can't stand the back of the organist's neck."

"Well, it's getting a bit late for the movies now."

"Oh, I don't know. We'll be in time for the big picture, if we go right away."

"Very well, where shall it be?"

"You decide. I decided last time."

"Okay—we'll make it the Odium."

"But didn't Charles say that picture was slightly lousy."

"Well, let's go and see *Wailing Along*. You won't mind sitting through it again, will you?"

"No, I wouldn't *really* mind, but if there is anything else on that I haven't seen. . . ."

"That leaves the Colossus. Come on, let's go."

"But, darling—that *dreadful* organist! I know, how about that funny little place in the High Street—they get incredibly good pictures there if you can stand the smell. . . . . George, where are you taking me—the Odium?"

"No, dear—the Crematorium."

CLASS CONSCIOUS

Bookings for school films are now being made at nearly double the rate they were made last year.

—News Item

"Jones Minor! Where are you going?"

"Please, sir, this is where I came in."

"You have yet to see the trailer of next week's chemistry lesson. I can promise you several explosions. Kindly be seated."

A Star's Goodbye to her Studio

Thanks for the memory
Of hours I used to sit
Around the place and knit
While half-a-dozen stooges fixed
A set that wouldn't fit—
How lovely it was.

And thanks for the memory
Of half-a-dozen flops,
That you still think are tops,
And all the British pictures
Made by Poles and Greeks and Wops—
How lovely it was.

I met such a nice lot of people,
And they seemed to know all the questions,
But oh! the improper suggestions!
Still, I got my cheque,
So what the heck.

Oh, thanks for the memory
Of endless night-club shots
And scenes with babies' cots,
That clever German cameraman
Who emphasised my spots—
Cheerio and tootle-oo.

Goodbye and nuts to you—
And thank you *so* much.

(*With acknowledgments.*)

Sayings

"There can only be one career in the family."—*Clifford Odets.*

"There isn't a natural beauty in Hollywood."—*Ern Westmore.*

"Girls are gradually getting back into the shape Nature intended them to have . . . a little curve here and there pleases everybody."—*Chorus Director Chuck Hansen.*

"Every American company remains solvent from the amount of money it gets out of England."—*Mr. Joseph Kennedy.*

"There are some lovely women in France."—*M. Domergne.*

"The secret of a good party is to ask the wrong people and mix them up. A good hostess has to be cruel."—*Elsa Maxwell.*

Away from it all

A plan has been put forward to show travel films in the Sing Sing Prison Cinema "depicting the lure of the open road and the beauties of other climes."

—News Item

Many an old lag discovered attempting to slip out at the tradesmen's entrance after the second house has been heard to say, "Aw heck, warden, it's that Mr. Lowell Thomas—he kinda brings out de gypsy in me."

"SWING IT, CHARLIE."

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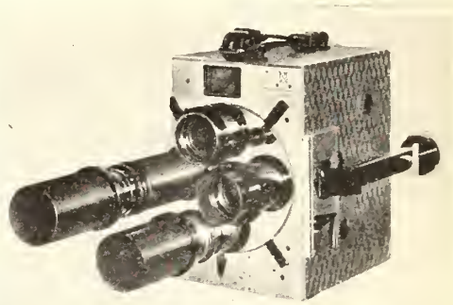

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—*The Cinema.*

"*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*"

ROBERT WIENE

An exclusive account of the life of the man who made 'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari'

ROBERT WIENE, film director, died in Paris during July. An emigré from Germany, he was nearly 60 years of age and had been without work for a long time. The Press, however, has not mentioned the real cause of his death: he died of fame.

Film fame is of two kinds; both are deadly. There is the fame of the popular "star" which kills its owner as soon as he loses his job, the film company having entangled him in a publicity-life which, as a private individual, he cannot afford. There is the more exclusive fame of the film director who presents an important work which drives him out of his profession by overshadowing the whole of his later career. D. W. Griffith is an example.

This was the fate of Robert Wiene. Critics could not understand his inability to repeat his first great success, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*—the biggest freak in film history. Finally Wiene became weary and just sought a quiet "commercial" job, as have done dozens of other able directors, whilst the motion picture industry assumed that he was too concerned with Art to accept what it might have offered him.

The fame of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, its historic importance and its legendary glory have lasted for nearly 20 years. It must have been shown by every Film Society in Britain. In it Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover and Werner Krauss played memorable parts.

Its making came about like this. In 1919 Robert Wiene, the son of an Austrian actor and a former student of Theatre History at the Vienna University, was invited to prove his worth on an experimental work in Berlin. Life was exciting in Berlin in 1919, crowded with revolutionary movements in the political as well as the social life of the country. "Expressionism" was the slogan of the day. Three painters—Herman Warm, Walther Röhrig and Walther Reimann—got hold of a film-scenario and designed its background by means of hundreds of expressionist drawings. It is said that one of the two authors, Hans Janowitz, strongly objected to this "expressionist" treatment, but Carl Mayer, the other author (who later was to become such an important figure in the German cinema), and Wiene's enthusiasm, prevailed. The theory was that the sets and costumes should be more than a background, they should be an elaborate psychological reflection of the story in its minutest detail: a theory that was to prevail for the next six years of German cinema.

Caligari, as Robert Wiene produced it, was a revolution, wholly in the spirit of the time. It succeeded in drawing the attention of intellectuals in Europe and America to the artistic possibilities of the film. It inspired much literature on film problems and provided a basis for discussion on the real purpose of the cinema. Some critics decry its close relations to the theatre. Others applaud its active approach. It came at a time when America was flooding the screens of the world with bright, sophisticated movies and adventure films of the western type.

The practical consequence of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was an era of expressionist films, putting the German experiments in the foreground of contemporary film art. Among them we remember Kobe's *Torgus*, Martin's *From Morn till Midnight*, Leni's *Waxworks* and Murnau's *Nosferatu* (*Dracula*). Robert Wiene took his further share by shooting *Genuine*, *Raskolnikoff* and *Orlac's Hands*. But the expressionist style faded into the background as realism prevailed. It had presented merely an exotic, decorative frame to stories with inadequate plots which only served their purpose to liquidate German post-war inhibitions.

Wiene's last films of importance were *Inri*, the story of Christ, and *Rosenkavalier* to the music of Richard Strauss. They were theatrical decorations quite unlike the style and aims of *Caligari*.

During his last years, Wiene made desperate efforts to revive *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* by shooting it again as a sound film. He tried to adapt its scenario to the new technique, to the new film business and even to the new politics of to-day. He was unable, however, to obtain the necessary financial support and was thus happily prevented from repeating a film, the success of which remains as unrepeatable as by-gone history itself.

Kraszna-Krausz

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FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.

BLACKPOOL: Plaza	August 21, 4 days
ISLINGTON: Empress	August 4, 3 days
NAIRN: Regal	August 4, 3 days
SOUTHWICK: New Kinema	August 18, 3 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw.

ADLINGTON: Cinema	August 4, 3 days
ARMTHORPE: Scala	August 1, 3 days
BLANTYRE: Picture House	August 3, 3 days
DIPTON: Empire	August 1, 3 days
EDLINGTON: Cinema	August 19, 2 days
KELLS: Savoy	August 11, 2 days
RUSH: Savoy	August 9, 2 days
SWANAGE: Grand	August 8, 3 days
THURNSCOE: Cinema	August 15, 2 days
WILLINGTON QUAY: Pearl	August 25, 3 days

Granton Trawler (A documentary of deep sea fishing).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: G.P.O. Film Unit.
DIRECTION: John Grierson.

NEWCASTLE: News Theatre	August 1, 6 days

Insect Oddities (A nature study).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BLACKPOOL: Rendezvous	August 4, 3 days
CROYDON: Savoy	August 21, 1 day
LONDON, EDGWARE ROAD: Blue Hall	August 1, 6 days
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE: News Theatre	August 8, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	August 1, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Pavilion	August 1, 3 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous Mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

BALLYMENA: State	August 19, 2 days
BANBRIDGE: Picture House	August 4, 2 days
CARRICKFERGUS: Ideal	August 29, 3 days
GARNDIFFAITH: Workman's Hall	August 29, 3 days
NETHYBRIDGE: Cinema	August 2, 2 days
NEWTONMORE: Cinema	August 2, 2 days
TILBURY: Palace	August 22, 3 days

Lancashire Lakeland (Scenic beauties of Lakeland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CROYDON: Savoy	August 23, 1 day
LANCASTER: County	August 15, 6 days
NORBURY: Rex	August 14, 1 day
SHOEBURYNESS: Palace	August 21, 4 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	August 8, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Pavilion	August 8, 6 days

Land of the Marimba.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BIRKENHEAD: Gaumont	August 22, 6 days
CHESTER: Gaumont Palace	August 1, 6 days
EAST GRINSTEAD: Radio Centre	August 8, 3 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	August 8, 6 days
GAINSBOROUGH: Grand	August 18, 3 days
HARBORNE: Picture House	August 25, 3 days
IPSWICH: Regent	August 15, 6 days
KILBURN: Palace	August 18, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	August 29, 6 days
LIVERPOOL, PRINCES PARK: Gaumont	August 29, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Plaza	August 29, 6 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 15, 3 days
REDDITCH: Gaumont Palace	August 29, 6 days
SALTAIRE: Picture House	August 11, 3 days

Mountain Barriers.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BURY: Odeon	August 11, 3 days
CHESTER: Music Hall	August 15, 6 days
CREWE: Odeon	August 22, 3 days
DALKEITH: Pavilion	August 11, 3 days
GLASGOW: Kings	August 18, 3 days
HAMILTON: La Scala	August 18, 3 days
HOXTON: Varieties	August 1, 3 days
LONDON, STRATFORD, E.: Imperial	August 1, 3 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	August 18, 3 days
NEWPORT, MON.: Odeon	August 8, 6 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 11, 3 days
REDDITCH: Gaumont Palace	August 25, 3 days
STOKE: Hippodrome	August 29, 6 days
TAUNTON: Gaumont Palace	August 15, 6 days
WHALLEY RANGE: Odeon	August 8, 3 days
WISHAW: Cinema	August 11, 3 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt.

BEWDLEY: Garden	August 1, 3 days
CARDONAGH: Colgan	August 14, 2 days
CRANLEIGH: Regal	August 22, 3 days
CURRAGH: Sandes	August 4, 3 days
MACHYNLLETH: Powys	August 11, 3 days
TILBURY: Palace	August 1, 3 days

FILMS
at the
TATLER THEATRE
Charing Cross Road

August 1	All Disney Programme
August 8	*Little Bear* (A.B.F.D.) *Catch of the Season* (Secrets of Life series; G.F.D.)
August 15	All Disney Programme
August 22	*Zoo and You* (Strand Films) *Land of Rhodes* (Colmore Films)
August 29	All Disney Programme

People in the Parks.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Paul Burnford.

BARNARD CASTLE: Scala	August 11, 3 days
BIRSTALL: Low Lane	August 15, 3 days
BURRADON: Lyric	August 1, 3 days
CARCROFT: Cinema	August 19, 2 days
CASTLETON: Ideal	August 8, 3 days
DARTMOUTH: Cinedrome	August 8, 3 days
DURSLEY: Odeon	August 22, 3 days
GRIMSBY: Tower	August 1, 6 days
HINDLEY: Palace	August 29, 3 days
LITTLEBORO': Queens	August 1, 3 days
MARPLE: Regent	August 1, 3 days
SHILDON: Picture House	August 21, 3 days
SOUTHWELL: Ideal	August 15, 3 days
SWANAGE: Grand	August 11, 3 days
THURNSCOE: Cinema	August 15, 2 days
WILLINGTON QUAY: Pearl	August 25, 3 days
WINTON: Moderne	August 25, 3 days

Picture People.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARROW: Coliseum	August 15, 6 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	August 1, 3 days
HEREFORD: Odeon	August 8, 3 days
HULL: Carlton	August 15, 3 days
HULL: Cecil	August 8, 6 days
HULL: National	August 18, 3 days
HULL: Playhouse	August 25, 3 days
HULL: Savoy	August 15, 3 days
LEEDS: Tatler News Theatre	August 22, 6 days
NOTTINGHAM: Grand	August 1, 3 days
WOLVERHAMPTON: Scala	August 8 .3 days

Power.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARROW: Coliseum	August 22, 6 days
CHIPPENHAM: Gaumont Palace	August 15, 3 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	August 18, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	August 18, 3 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	August 11, 3 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	August 25, 3 days
KETTERING: Odeon	August 22, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Grand	August 8, 3 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 4, 3 days
SWINDON: Palace	August 18, 3 days
WISHAW: Cinema	August 25, 3 days

Six-Thirty Collection (Documentary of the West End Sorting office).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey and Harry Watt.

EDLINGTON: Cinema	August 19, 2 days

Sunny Tessin (Survey of the Canton Tessin, Southern Switzerland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

CARLISLE: City	August 29, 3 days
GRIMSBY: Savoy	August 29, 6 days
LEEDS: Hillcrest Picture Lounge	August 8, 3 days
LONDON, PICCADILLY CIRCUS: Eros News Theatre	August 15, 3 days
LONDON, VICTORIA STATION: News Theatre	August 1, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Tatler News Theatre	August 1, 6 days

This Other Eden (A trip down the river Eden, in Westmorland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CROYDON: Savoy	August 14, 1 day
HEYWOOD: Picturedrome	August 18, 3 days
MABLETHORPE: Victoria	August 25, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: Ritz	August 29, 6 days
SCUNTHORPE: Jubilee	August 4, 3 days
STALYBRIDGE: Princes	August 15, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Pavilion	August 22, 6 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson.

ARMTHORPE: Scala	August 1, 2 days
CAERPHILLY: Castle	August 29, 2 days
CASTLETON: Ideal	August 8, 3 days
COXHOE: Gem	August 4, 3 days
CRAMLINGTON: Rex	August 1, 2 days
HINDLEY: Palace	August 29, 3 days
STOCKPORT: King's	August 19, 2 days
WIGTOWN: Palace	August 29, 3 days

Town and Gown (Buildings, scenery and life of Oxford and Cambridge).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Peter Collin.

CHELMSFORD: Ritz	August 8, 6 days
CHICHESTER: Plaza	August 11, 3 days
HEREFORD: Odeon	August 21, 7 days
NORWICH: Carlton	August 29, 6 days
WELSHPOOL: Pola	August 15, 3 days

Tropical Springtime (Travelogue on Costa Rica).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BIRKENHEAD: Super	August 1, 3 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	August 29, 3 days
LANCASTER: County	August 29, 3 days
PORTSMOUTH: Classic	August 21, 4 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	August 25, 3 days

Valleys of Romance.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARNSTAPLE: Gaumont Palace	August 8, 6 days
GUERNSEY: Gaumont Palace	August 1, 6 days
GUERNSEY: Gaumont Palace	August 15, 6 days
HARROW: Coliseum	August 29, 7 days
ILFRACOMBE: Scala	August 8, 6 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princes	August 22, 6 days

Shorts (contd.)

Way to the Sea (Documentary of the roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes.

BERMONDSEY: Rialto	August 11, 3 days
BIRSTALL: Low Lane	August 15, 3 days
BURNHOPE: Miners	August 18, 3 days
BURRADON: Lyric	August 1, 3 days
CAISTOR: Cinema	August 11, 2 days
CURRAGH: Sandes	August 11, 3 days
GARNDIFFAITH: Workman's Hall	August 29, 2 days
LIMERICK: Tivoli	August 1, 2 days
NORTHAMPTON: Regal	August 4, 3 days
TILBURY: Palace	August 18, 3 days
WARLEY: Odeon	August 15, 6 days
WREXHAM: Glynn	August 29, 2 days

Weather Forecast (How information is gathered for official forecasts).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson.
DIRECTION: Evelyn Spice.

CARCROFT: Cinema	August 19, 2 days

Youth Marches On (True-life saga of Empire youth, inspired by the Oxford Group).
DISTRIBUTION: Butcher's Film Service Ltd.
PRODUCTION: Positive Productions.
DIRECTION: Eric Parfit and George Fraser.

ASHFORD: Odeon	August 8, 6 days
BANGOR: Plaza	August 22, 6 days
BARKING: Rio	August 8, 6 days
BATH: News Theatre	August 8, 6 days
BEBINGTON: Regal	August 4, 3 days
BIRKENHEAD: Empire	August 1, 6 days
BRIXHAM: Electric	August 4, 3 days
CHESTER: Odeon	August 29, 6 days
CLEATOR MOOR: Hippodrome	August 4, 3 days
COBHAM: Savoy	August 15, 6 days
CRAVEN ARMS: Regal	August 22, 6 days
DEAL: Odeon	August 1, 6 days
DEWSBURY: Pioneer	August 15, 6 days
DUNDEE: Kinema	August 15, 6 days
DUNDEE: Kinnaird	August 15, 6 days
FARNHAM: Regal	August 25, 3 days
FAVERSHAM: Odeon	August 18, 3 days
FINCHLEY: Odeon	August 15, 6 days
FROME: Grand	August 22, 6 days
GOOLE: Tower	August 29, 6 days
HARPENDEN: Austral	August 25, 3 days
HARROGATE: Odeon	August 29, 6 days
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: Luxor	August 1, 6 days
HULL: National	August 18, 3 days
HULL: Cecil	August 15, 6 days
HULL: Dorchester	August 15, 6 days
ILFORD: Savoy	August 8, 6 days
IRVINE: Kyrle Palace	August 15, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Walton Vale	August 4, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Prince of Wales	August 18, 3 days
MORETON: Picturehouse	August 1, 6 days
NORWICH: Carlton	August 8, 6 days
PETERBOROUGH: Odeon	August 8, 6 days
PORTRUSH: Picturehouse	August 1, 6 days
RAMSGATE: Royal	August 29, 6 days
RAYNES PARK: Rialto	August 15, 6 days
RICHMOND: Richmond	August 15, 6 days
ST. ALBAN'S: Chequers	August 29, 6 days
TENBURY WELLS: Regal	August 8, 6 days
TENTERDEN: Embassy	August 1, 6 days
THROCKLEY: Lyric	August 22, 6 days
TIVERTON: Electric	August 18, 3 days
WALLASEY: Queens	August 18, 3 days
NORTH WALSHAM: Royal	August 8, 6 days
WATFORD: Regal	August 8, 6 days
WARRINGTON: Picturehouse	August 4, 3 days
WORCESTER: Scala	August 1, 6 days

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Foreign Films

The Last Night (Russian)
DIRECTION: Yu. Raizman
STARRING: M. G. Yarotskaya
N. I. Dorokhin
I. R. Peltser
N. N. Ribnikov
LONDON: Academy — Indefinitely (after *Le Roi S'amuse*)

L'homme du Jour (French)
DIRECTION: Julien Duvivier
STARRING: Maurice Chevalier
Elvire Popesco
Alerme
LONDON: Berkeley — Indefinitely

Orage (French)
DIRECTION: Marc Allegret
STARRING: Charles Boyer
Michèle Morgan
Jean-Louis Barrault
LONDON: Curzon — Until August 7

The Thirteen (Russian)
DIRECTION: Michael Romm
STARRING: I. Novoseltsev
Kuzmina
A. Chistyakov
A. Feit
LONDON: Forum — Until August 14

Double Crime sur la Ligne Maginot (French)
DIRECTION: Félix Gandéra
STARRING: Victor Francen
Vera Korène
LONDON: Forum — August 14 until 28

Liszt Rhapsody (German)
DIRECTION: Carmine Gallone
STARRING: Paul Hörbiger
Sybille Schmitz
Luis Rainer
Ida Wüst
LONDON: Studio One — Indefinitely (after July 29)

CULTURE FILMS UNDER THE NAZIS

In the recent special film-number of *Wille und Macht* (Will and Power), chief organ of the Nazi Youth, Frank Maraun, the German film-critic, vigorously attacks the Reich's policy for films. The following extracts published from this paper by the *Deutsche Informationen* reveal how the German culture film, sent abroad by Goebbels as propaganda, is treated at home.

There are two outstanding characteristics of the German culture film: its undeniable merit, acknowledged even by other countries, and the fact that it is always forced to take a Cinderella part. Yet the culture films were the bright lights of last year's film production. Our entertainment films were much less readily acclaimed.

It is well worth our while taking the trouble to understand what this means. The independent film producers, who make films on their own account and sell to the Renters are forced, by the conditions of a greatly overstocked market, to accept a rate of payment which can scarcely be expected to keep them alive. Many, in fact, drop out of existence. There were about 150 independent producers of culture films in Germany, two or three years ago. To-day, not more than twenty of these are left.

It is true that the Reich department for films has decreed, as a protective measure, a minimum price of 10 Reichsmarks per meter; but, in the open market, the minimum tends to become the maximum. The Renters often try to save expenses, also, by lowering the price for the music accompaniment, which they customarily commission for each picture they have received. The usual rate for the composer is now one Reichsmark per meter. With an average length of 300 to 350 meters, this means a total fee of about 300 to 350 marks.

Bitter thoughts arise when we compare the lavishness with which money is spent on feature films. The average feature film of to-day usually costs about 500,000 marks to produce.

The culture film section of Tobis has now been merged with Ufa, which means that the production of German culture films has been concentrated at a single centre. The open market is thus restricted to the American Renters and a few of the smaller German companies. Ufa now engages a number of independent producers of culture films to co-operate in its production schedule, and we can only hope that the company will be careful not to reduce to a general level of dull uniformity the individual qualities of the independents. We need a courageous vanguard, a group of pioneers able, step by step, to discover the creative possibilities of the film and to make use of them.

Nouvelles Allemandes, Paris

Television

Each month Thomas Baird will keep W.F.N. readers fully informed on the progress and development of Television in Great Britain

An American visitor to this country, when asked what he thought of the Derby, guessed that it had come to stay. Something of the same might be said about television; the fact is that television is no longer merely experimental; it is an amazingly accomplished fact.

It is true, of course, that television must remain experimental so long as it is limited by the money the Department has to spend, and as it is expensive listening hours must be, for the time at least, limited. It is also true that television sets are expensive and we must not expect to find one in every back parlour just yet. But the same was true of gramophones and wireless sets and is still true in a degree of home film projectors. But one experience of an outside broadcast by television is quite sufficient to convince anyone that television has come to stay.

I can remember, it must have been about 1922, hearing a man say, when listening to a crystal set, that he did not believe for a moment that the B.B.C. were so foolish as to have an orchestra in the studio. He was convinced that when the announcer told us that we were to hear a Symphony Orchestra that an engineer merely played a gramophone record. He failed to appreciate that the playing of a gramophone record did not detract from the miracle of radio but, if anything, added to it. The B.B.C. have since proved this. The significant fact is that radio is a means of mass communication and that while the old gramophone filled the homes of individuals, the gramophone by radio filled the homes of the nation. It will therefore be no detraction from the marvel of television if the B.B.C. make use of film, and indeed I hope they will make more and more use of film. If they did little more than carry the already considerable mass of documentary, instructional and travel films to the millions of people whom these films normally pass by, they will have done something worthy of achievement.

But already they are doing much more than this. Radio in general, in spite of the arty and crafty hokum which has surrounded a number of programmes, continues to be significant for two reasons. One is that it is the most universal means of mass communication, and second there is its immediacy. Radio can report within the split second; so, too, can television. The most exciting broadcasts have been the outside ones such as *The Derby*, *The Trooping of the Colour* and *The Boat Race*. While the mass communication of these programmes might be limited to merely thousands of sets, the immediacy was electric. Newsreels seemed historical records the day after one had seen the Derby by television. The Test Match broadcast indeed made most newsreels look pretty silly. Here, with no time lag, was a brilliant account of the excitement of the game, and the amount of detail picked up by the carefully handled cameras was magnificent. The television camera cannot make a cut in the film sense but the quick mix from bowler to batsman was an indication that television had something of its own to offer. All this is merely a confirmation of something that radio has demonstrated again and again. The biggest listening audiences, I believe, are for the King's speech on Christmas Day and for the nine o'clock broadcast of football pools results from non-B.B.C. stations. Research figures are reputed to show that there is a very large audience for the news bulletin, the weather forecast and for any major sport event. This seems to indicate that the public do rely on radio in the first place as a news agency in the widest sense of the word. In spite, therefore, of the enthusiasms of some for the Foundations of Music and the Experimental Drama hour, I remain convinced that the very stuff of radio can be made out of its ability to tell all the people all about everything all the time—and no fooling. Television, even in its present form, does this admirably with an immediacy and an intimacy denied to any other medium. It would be well if the television department concentrated on this signal service in their near developments.

The version of *Julius Cæsar* broadcast on Sunday, 24th July, illustrated this point admirably. There were three points of interest in the production:

(1) It was a play which we all knew.

(2) It was done in modern dress.

(3) It introduced the penumbrascope.

It is a great play. As it is written it depends chiefly on the actors and the words. On or off the stage the same criterion applies to the speeches. If they are well spoken half the battle is won. Most of the actors did well, but as usual, Cæsar himself proved the most difficult part and as usual was the least satisfying. So much for the criticism which must obtain in any presentation. What had Television to offer that the stage had not? Mr. Dallas Bower, who claims some affinity with the cinema, was able to add a point or two. He dubbed the soliloquies, which was a good idea, but he did not make the distinction between the oratorical soliloquies and the subjective ones. His technique was successful so long as it represented the sub-conscious prompting of the mind in Cassius and Brutus but it failed when applied to the soliloquies which served as Chorus. Mark Antony informed the audience of the progress of his plan through sealed lips.

The super-imposed ghost, the rioting scenes and the war scenes taken from film were the kind of things we expect Television to produce, and the standard offered by film must be, if not the criterion, then the objective.

There was nothing significantly televisual in the modern dress approach but it was a good idea and worked out as well as the text would allow, though why Brutus and Cassius did not use their six-shooters on Cæsar I cannot imagine.

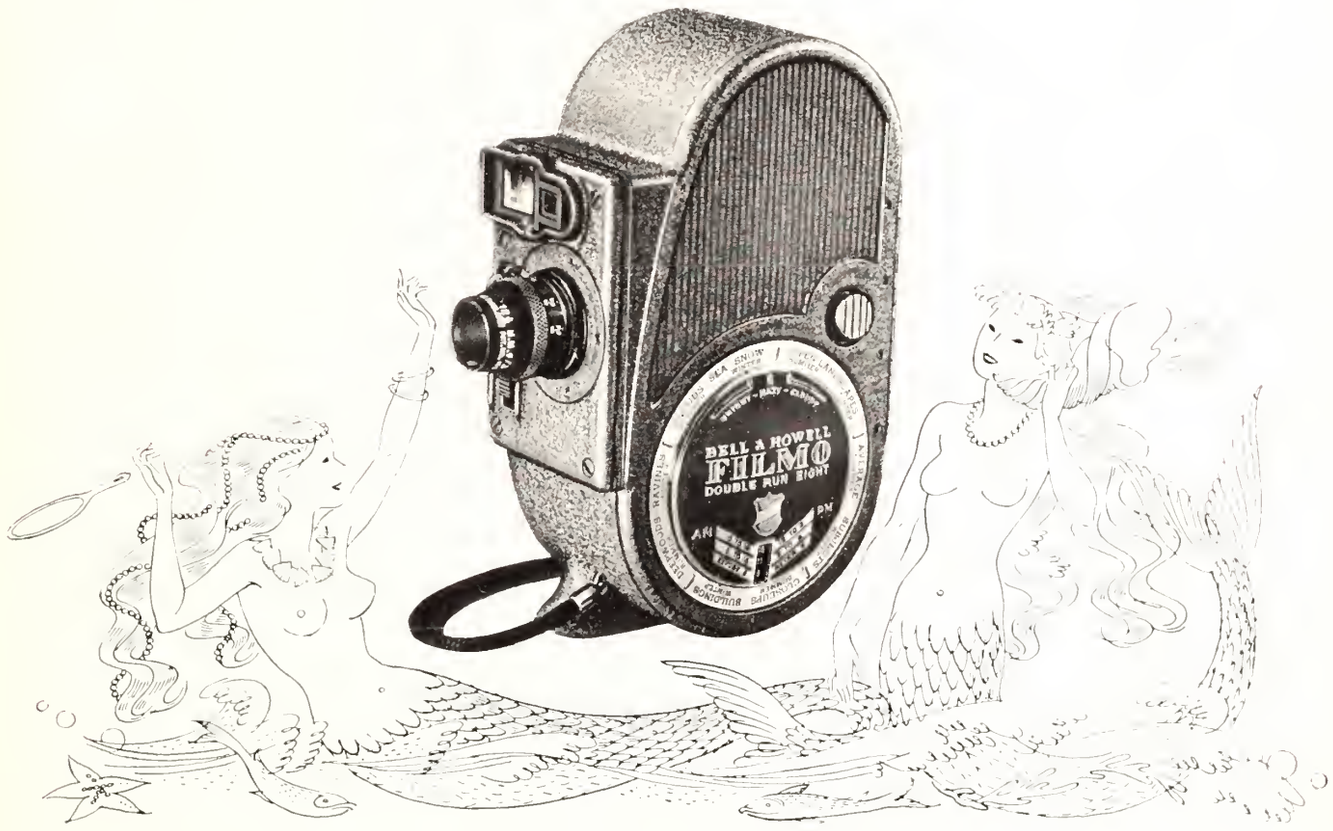
The penumbrascope, on the other hand, suggests great possibilities. Space and depth are difficult in a small studio and these limits bind the scope of any production. The penumbrascope which produces a shadow cyclorama does not yet give scale to the small studio but it does produce a method of quick change of scene in close-up and mid-shot. It can change mood with increased facility and I fancy it is less expensive than scenery. It needs to be worked out with more regard for the general lighting scheme and it would probably show up better with simpler foreground lighting.

There were times when the stage seemed very crowded and I wondered why Mr. Bower did not raise one of his cameras to a higher angle after the fashion that the newsreel camera oversees a procession. A wider angle of incidence of the cameras would improve the difficult mix from close-up to long shot.

I can imagine that their Drama will require to invest itself with something of this spirit if it is to be anything different from the stage or from the cinema. On the grounds of mass communication I can see no reason why television should not broadcast films or broadcast stage plays. I think they are perfectly justified to spread these two media in a fashion which is within its power only. In these cases the test of quality beyond technicalities must obviously be the test supplied normally to the stage and to films. Already we have had evidence of this. Well-written stage plays televise well: badly-written stage plays are equally bad on the air.

When we come up against something like D. H. Monro's version of a Russian Ballet rehearsal, we have got something which is bringing alive this peculiar quality with a spontaneity and immediacy which belongs to television. This production eavesdropped on reality. It was television doing its own peculiar job and therefore television at its own very best.

"If you must go down to the sea again.
To the lonely sea and the sky. . . ."



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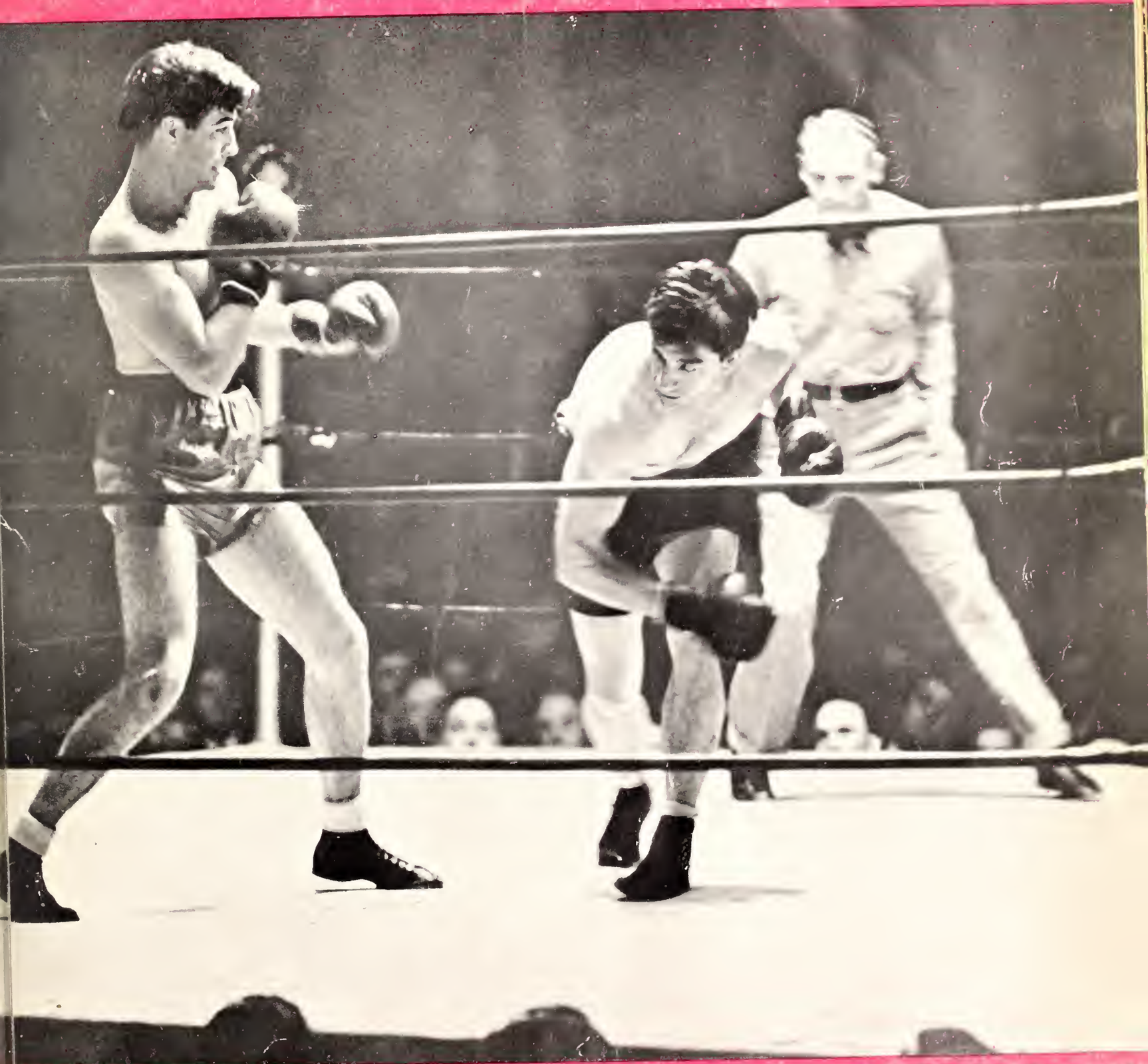

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IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Still: Robert Taylor in *The Crowd Roars*

Voodoo Jam Session: by *Stan Patchett* 192. 193

Good Old Stymie Beard: by *Russell Ferguson* 194, 195

Cagney is Tough Enough: by *Gilbert Seldes* 196, 197

Hollywood Diary: by *Daniel Fuchs* 198, 199, 200, 201

How to Undress: by *Glen Norris* 202, 203

It's in the Script: *Karl Mayer* talks to *Paul Rotha* 204, 205

It's still Home to Us: from *The Times* 205

The Prissy Pants of Literature: by *John Grierson* 206, 207

Give Us Lamour: by *Alexander Shaw* 208, 209

Charlie Chan: by *Richard Carr* 211

The Lone Prairie: by *Alistair Cooke* 212, 213, 215

Job to be Done: *Pare Lorentz's* Radio Play 216, 217, 219

Films Reviewed: by *Basil Wright* and *Marion Fraser* . . . 220, 221

Review of Reviews: by *H. E. Blyth* 222, 223, 224, 225

Cockalorum 226, 227

Radio: by *George Audit* 229

Film Guide 230, 231

Television: by *Thomas Baird* 232

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VOODOO JAM SESSION

Latch on to Fats Waller and other Killer Dillers with STAN PATCHETT

"THE old left hand isn't what it was," said the young man with the untidy hair and the baggy trousers.

"You make me sick," said my wife with some heat, "Can't you see he's doing the thing he wants to do and playing the way he feels like playing?"

She had just finished reading Dorothy Baker's *Young Man With a Horn* and felt that at last she knew the true significance of *le jazz hot*.

It was the second house at the London Palladium, and we were standing at the back of the stalls watching Fats Waller go through his act.

They were both wrong, of course. I had never heard Fats in better form, and he was playing the way he knew his audience would appreciate it best, for Fats, like most negro performers, is a born showman.

Showmanship and swing music were as far removed as your third cousin Annie till Cabell "Hi de Hi" Calloway clowned and yowled his way to fame. After that it was every cat for himself.

Slang nutty America has recently coined a brand new name for the exhibitionistic swing man—killer diller.

Ex-soda clerk, Gene Krupa, former star drummer with Benny Goodman and now leading his own outfit, is Killer Diller No. 1.

Soaked in perspiration and muttering: "Lyonnaise potatoes and *some* pork chops!" over and over again as he battered out his killer diller rhythms for the Goodman band, Krupa was a wow with the college boys and girls, but just a pain-on-the-drums to that newest menace to sane journalism—the swing music critic.

Seeing that this article—which started out as a review of the Fats Waller act at the Palladium—has now taken it on itself to introduce swing to the readers of this paper, it might be as well to go back to the beginning of swing—to try and give you some idea of what it's all about, for, believe you me, there are very few who *do* know what it is all about!

Take a map of the southern states of America, place your thumb over the spot marking New Orleans, capital of the state of Louisiana, and you have under your thumb the birthplace of jazz.

Various writers have named in turn, W. C. Handy, King Oliver, The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, and even Red Nichols, as the originators of swing music, but the honour goes to picturesque Jelly Roll Morton.

Jelly Roll was swinging the musical form now known as jazz as far back as 1902—long before the others came on the rhythm scene.

"King Porter Stomp," to-day a stand-by with all swing bands, was written and published in 1906. The following year a number called "Georgia Swing" was the rage around New Orleans.

A lot of far fetched stories have been told about the origin of the "St. Louis Blues." Actually it was written in 1911 by Guy Williams, a guitarist in Handy's band—he called himself "Professor" Handy in those days—and was titled "Jogo Blues." Handy had it published under its original title, but later changed it to "The St. Louis Blues" and put his own name on it. Copyright laws and morals were lax in bawdy, gaudy New Orleans.

The blues were being sung and played around New Orleans at the latter end of the eighteenth century. Happy Galloways was a famous blues singer of this period.

Crazy Buddy Bolden, the first of the jazz Gabriels, used to play the blues so loud on his cornet that the plaintive notes could be heard 12 miles away. Buddy blew his top and ended up in an asylum, a fate that befell many early swing players.

By 1912 the jazz rash was spreading all over America like a plague. Bands playing on the river boats that paddled their dreamy way up the Mississippi infected listeners with the jungle beat of the strong brown feet.

So far, so good. Having now absorbed the fact that jazz is a form of music that is written down on paper and preserved for as long as desired, we come to the question that catches most of 'em with the britches well down—just what *is* swing?

Swing is taking a recorded or remembered tune and creating your own musical pattern as you play. A really great swing man never repeats the same chorus twice, but there are those who will repeat a phrase, or riff, over and over again if it tickles their musical fancy. As in writing, the musical cliché will invariably bring disaster to its originator. The Quintette of the Hot Club of France, which features brilliant violinist Stephane Grappelly and amazing guitarist Django Reinhardt—and I use the superlatives with discretion—is at the moment suffering from an overdose of clichés but they are sure to snap out of it as they are both sincere musicians.

SWING, or creative jazz, has the advantage (for the listener) of being based on simple melodies that leave plenty of scope for your swing man to weave his melodic magic around.

So you see, jazz and swing are one and the same thing, but the music produced by such inspired swing artists as Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Eddie Lang, Joe Venuti, Teddy Wilson, Benny Goodman, Bix Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden, Meade Lux Lewis, Jimmy Noone, Fats Waller, Joe Sullivan, Red Norvo, Fletcher Henderson and Don Redman—to name just a few—will live a thousand times longer than the original melodies churned out by razor witted song writers of Tin Can Alley.

SWING first hits you like a jab in the arm with a hypodermic. I've already told over the air how I first became interested in swing music eleven years ago on a rainy night in Chicago.

I'd been to the Dempsey-Tunney fight and had wandered into a speak-easy afterwards to try and erase the memory of the comeback that had failed.

Everybody was talking about the fight, so I went into the back room where a bunch of fellows were standing around a battered Victrola, talking and drinking, and playing through a stack of records worn white with constant use.

I sat at the table in a corner and listened to the talk going on around me. Most of it was about the musicians who played on the records, and I remember it intrigued me that the playing of a simple melody like a jazz tune warranted any criticism.

One record in particular was played over and over again. A clarinet was the solo instrument and there was speculation as to who the player was.

Even I could share their enthusiasm—there was courage and rhythm in the playing that had its parallel in the panther-like grace of Dempsey.

"Who's the player?" everybody kept asking. Nobody knew.

Finally somebody said: "Get Joe, he'll know."

Joe was the barman. He listened to the record—head cocked on one side, foot tapping out the rhythm of "The Dallas Blues."

"It's Benny Goodman," he said finally, "He was only a kid in short pants when I knew him, but I'd know his playing anywhere."

I got talking to Joe the barman afterwards. He didn't play himself, but he was a mine of information on jazz and jazz musicians—the original hot rhythm fan.

When he saw that my interest was aroused, names tumbled from his enthusiastic lips in a cascade. Goodman was O.K., but if I wanted to hear a clarinet player that really gave you

Fats Waller.

SWING MUSICIAN'S SLANG

is bewildering and picturesque. Here are some quotations from Cab Calloway's "Cat-ologue", a "Hepsters" dictionary:

barrelhouse	*free and easy*
boogie-woogie	*heavy bass harmony*
belly fiddle	*guitar*
break it up	*to stop the show*
bring down	*depressing*
cat	*swing musician*
clambake	*every man for himself*
corny	*old fashioned*
doghouse	*bass fiddle*
dicty	*high class*
gob stick	*clarinet*
gate	*a swing man*
gutbucket	*low-down music*
hep cat	*someone who knows the answers*
icky	*opposite to the above*
iron-works	*vibraphone*
in the groove	*perfect*
jitter bug	*swing fan*
jive	*to kid along*
jam	*improvised swing music*
latch on	*get wise*
long hair	*classical musician*
licks	*hot musical phrases*
mellow	*fine*
ofay	*a white person*
off the cob	*corny*
out of this world	*perfect*
rock me	*send me*
reefer	*marihuana*
rug cutter	*a very good dancer*
schmaltz	*sweet music*
send	*arouse the emotions*
viper	*one who smokes reefers*
weed	*marihuana*
woodpile	*xylophone*

the burn, I should wander along to a joint called "The Nest" and get a load of a spade by the name of Jimmy Noone.

Even straight musicians used to haunt "The Nest" because Noone, besides being such a "hot" player, was also a master technician.

Maurice Revel used to listen to Noone night after night and had expressed the opinion that his style was years in advance of other musicians.

Joe also wanted me to go with him to Sam Beer's famous café, "The Three Deuces," to hear another great clarinet player named Frank Teschmaker, Joe Sullivan, a marvellous pianist and young Gene Krupa, a noisy and exuberant drummer.

I never went, and had to leave Chicago the next day but the swing fever was in my blood and has stayed with me ever since.

There's one thing I would make clear—swing is no lady of high degree—she's a Bessie Cotter, with a liking for the bottle, a great big hand for the boys and a figure of generous proportions that's starting to go to fat.

Take her for what she's worth and you'll have lots of laughs, but start to get scientific and find what makes the wheels go round and you'll come up against a wall that's too blank to be believable.

We started with Fats Waller, so it's fitting that we finish with him.

A customer in a cabaret once objected to the noise made by Fats' foot as he beat out a rhythm in time with his flying fingers on the keys.

Flashing him a big grin, Fats replied:

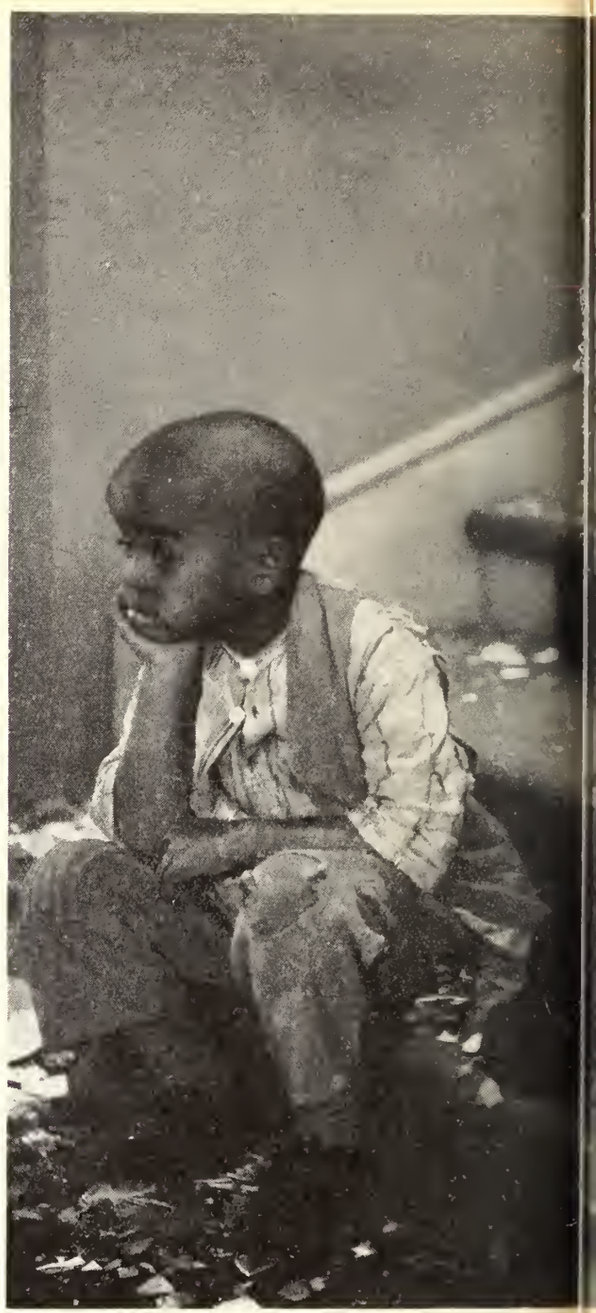
"I'll take mah shoe off, suh, but mah ole foot keeps right on a-tappin'!"

That's swing you may scorn it, sicken of it, despise it, but your foot will keep on a-tapping just the same.

GOOD OLD STYMIE BEARD

Your favourite film actor may be Paul Muni, or Spencer Tracy, or Greta Garbo, but that's because your ideas on screen acting are all wrong.

RUSSELL FERGUSON *has found his ideal screen actor; someone you have never heard of up till now. You may think, after reading this article, that there is no such person, so we have taken the precaution of putting his picture on these pages. He's sitting down.*



TELL me, who is your favourite actor in the movies?

Do you remember when Our Gang took the carpets out on the lawn to beat them, and then went and fetched the lawn-mower?

What about it?

Do you remember the man about four years old who wagged his head and said "They'll never learn"?

Sure I remember. What's his name?

Spanky McFarland, my favourite actor except Stymie Beard.

But who is your favourite movie actor, really.

I just told you, Spanky McFarland or Stymie Beard, I don't know which.

But they're only kids. What about Paul Muni?

Well, he's good too, but not as good as Stymie Beard.

But that's silly, Stymie Beard would have been no use in Emile Zola.

It's nothing of the kind, silly. Paul Muni would be no use in Our Gang.

But these kids are only kids.

So what? Paul Muni is only a man, and Katharine Hepburn is only a woman, and Asta is only a dog. Only kids isn't an argument.

Ah, you make me laugh. Stymie Beard.

I can prove it though.

Well, prove it. Prove that he's better than Paul Muni.

Easy. Have you ever seen Stymie Beard give a bad performance? No. For that matter have you ever seen him in a bad picture? No. Have you ever seen Paul Muni give a bad performance? Yes. In *The Good Earth* you said yourself he was a ham most of the time, walking about with his toes turned out and a silly smile on his face. I don't blame him for it, but he was a ham all the same.

Ah, this is just one of your stunts. At that rate, Asta is about the best actor in Hollywood.

Well, so he is. And Rin Tin Tin and Snookey and Tom Mix's horse, all good actors. A horse is never a ham. Do you not remember when William S. Hart used to stand twisting his hat over the grave of some desert flower, and his horse used to stand at his elbow just showing him how to act? He got so like his horse in the end that he was a pretty good actor.

That's been a joke since about 1924.

You mean it's been a fact since about 1924.

Well, never mind the horses. Get back to Our Gang. It's silly to talk about them, they're not even the best of kids.

Well, who is?

Shirley Temple, obviously.

What at?

At acting. She can sing and dance and play the piano.

And since when was that acting?

If it's not acting, what is it?

Vaudeville.

Quibbling now.

Nothing of the kind. You have to keep to one thing at a time, or you get all mixed up. Take Alice Faye and Virginia Bruce, both about the same height and weight, one a crooner and the other an actress. Are you going to say that Alice Faye is the better actress because she can put across a torch song? She said herself the other day, Garbo is Garbo, but I'm only one verse and two choruses.

Well, what about Shirley Temple? She's an actress, isn't she?

Haven't I told you that all kids are movie actors and actresses? It's not the actress bit of Shirley Temple that puts her away up top, it's the vaudeville bit of her. With Deanna Durbin it's concert arias, with Judy Garland it's scat-singing. It has to be something. On the basis of plain acting, kids are all about the same, and all marvellous.

How can they be all marvellous if they're all about the same?

It's just one of those things. Tigers are all marvellous and all about the same. Tiger tiger burning bright, tiger tiger burning bright.

First it's horses, then it's burning tigers. Let's get back to the kids. Anybody would think you could just walk into the street, grab a kid, and make a movie actor out of him, just like that.

Well, so you can. Did you read how they found Tommy Kelly for Tom Sawyer? It was just like that. Playing football on a vacant lot. This was after they had measured the ears and noses of half the kids in America. Then they whistle one in off the street, and he is just what they want.

But I thought Tommy Kelly was a sensational discovery, quite unique.

Everybody is a sensational discovery, and everybody is quite unique. That's what makes the movies go round and round.

Well, if they can get kids as easy as that, why can't they get adults the same way?

They can and they do, and they keep telling you about it. How I got my start in the movies. I was waiting in the outer office, and a big executive came out and said Hey you. I was selling hot dogs, and a big executive came up and said Hey you. I was cleaning windows and a big executive came over and said Hey you. Two elements are common to all the stories, and these two elements are big executive and hey you.

And what happens after that?

Wash and brush up, shave, polish, film actor.

I thought they got a screen test or something.

Ah, yes, that's to see if they can stand up, sit down, turn round and smile. If they get through the test with flying colours, they're all right. Even if they don't it's not hopeless. W. C. Fields made a comedy once in which he was so ill that he could not stand, sit or turn, but since it was a movie it was all right. The movies are so synthetic that they can fix up the lame, the halt and the blind so that you'd never notice.

Well, that's not what the actors say.

WHAT do you expect the actors to say? They talk about their careers and so on, you don't expect them to blow the gaff. In any case the movies are an unblowable gaff. Jackie Coogan blew it in *The Kid*, but nobody noticed. Our Gang blows it every time it appears on the screen and nobody notices. Asta is blowing it now, twice over, once by coming over from America to make a picture, and again by going back to America before the picture's finished and leaving the rest to a stand-in. Next thing, they'll be bringing a tennis racket from America to feature in some big film. They could do it, if they set their minds to it.

Well, after all that, I still think it takes personality and intelligence to be a film actor.

Nobody denied it. Personality is a thing everybody has some of, and as for the intelligence, Stymie Beard is the measure of the amount required. This just means that a normal film actor has about ten times as much intelligence as he needs for his job. That is what fed Leslie Howard up. He kept asking why am I standing this way, why am I to smile, tell me a bit of the story, and he kept on being bawled out for insubordination, and finally he packed in, and came to this country to direct.

Why do you always talk about the movies as if there was something wrong with them?

I'm not knocking the movies. I'm only saying how they work, it seems to me. You started it with your question about my favourite actor, and I tell you Stymie Beard, and go on to say pretty nearly everybody is my favourite actor, and what is acting anyway, on the movies? Just go there, come here, stand still, look up a little to the left, hold it, down with your chin, hold it. Then you think I must be knocking the actors. You start off with the old assumption that the actors make the movies.

The publicity boys sold you that idea when they invented stars, twenty-five years ago. They sell you William Powell so that you'll go and see him next time because you saw him last time. Now when you ask me my favourite actor I could have said William Powell, it's just as true. Favourite actor. You might as well ask me my favourite colour.

THE movies make the actors. Nobody knows better than the actors themselves. They kick against it, too. I told you how Leslie Howard reacted. The latest news from America is that Myron Selznick is trying to rally them in a co-operative production scheme, against the big bosses. The big bosses reply, We made you, and if you walk out on us we'll make another bunch just as good. The actors reply is, Maybe so, but we're made now, and meanwhile we'll be cleaning up.

Another thing, Louis Calhern and Jack La Rue have come to England to act in *Golden Boy*, partly because at least they are tired of being made into bad men by the movies. But typing is an old story. You know it all, but you forget that making stars is just a form of typing.

Knocking the stars would be silly in any case. Did not Edgar Kennedy say the other day that if a picture is bad, it's not the actor's fault? And isn't this pretty true? The ball no question makes of ayes and nos.

Meaning what?

Meaning, don't knock the actor, he's only a stooge. Anyway, I'm a sucker for them – I admire all the men, nearly, am in love with all the women, nearly, and dote on all the children, nearly.

Well, after all that, who *is* your favourite actor?

I told you, Stymie Beard.

You're sticking to that?

Stymie Beard, Stymie Beard, good old Stymie Beard.

I thought you liked William Powell?

So I do, and Pat O'Brien, and Melvyn Douglas and Zasu Pitts.

Well, why pick on Stymie Beard?

Because I don't see his name screaming at me from every newspaper I lift, like William Powell. I will not be bossed by the publicity boys.

Sales resistance, eh?

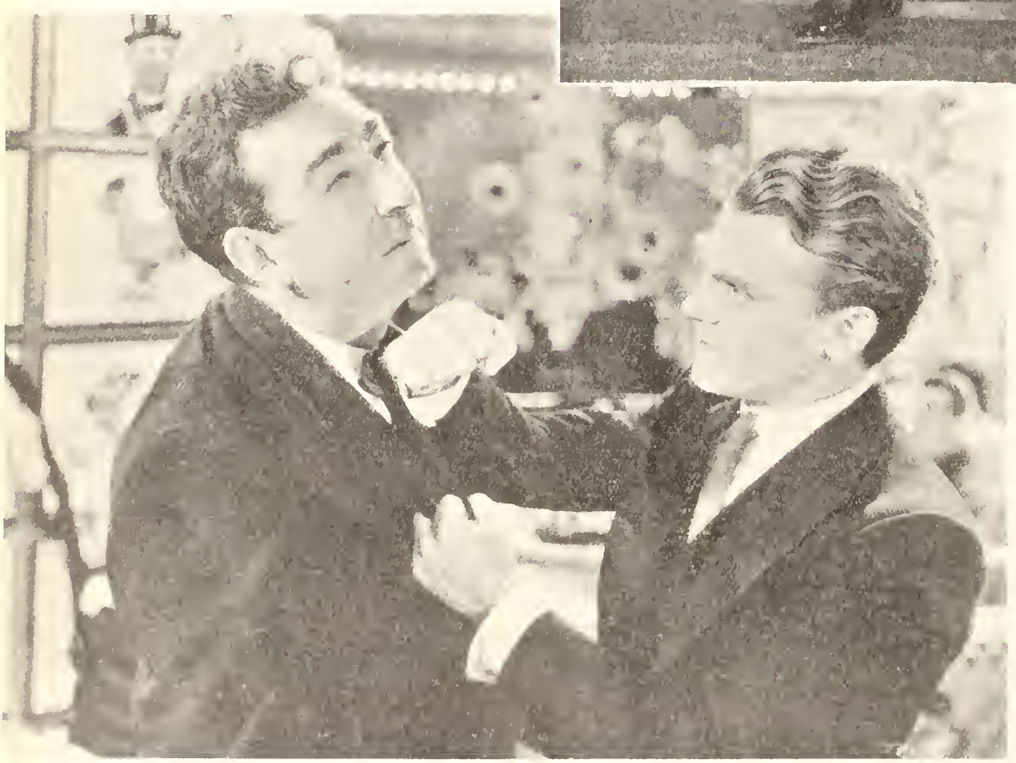
Sales resistance. I found out his name for myself, and I am one of the few people in the world who know it. It's a nice name, too.

What is?

Stymie Beard.

CAGNEY is TOUGH ENOUGH

by Gilbert Seldes



Top right: James Cagney and Marie Wilson, starring in 'Boy Meets Girl', the new Warner Bros. film. Above: A scene from an early Cagney film, 'Taxi'.

THE one thing Hollywood can't get over is that it has an actor in its population. Almost apologetically, the fact is mentioned, but not in those words. The usual expression is: "Cagney isn't tough off the screen." The accents of surprise at this bewildering fact are touching; the press agents who have written about James Cagney are gratified because it gives them a new slant, but even they can't quite see what it leads to. It leads, of course, to the fact that Cagney is an actor. Apparently that comes under the heading of news in Hollywood.

Actually, Cagney isn't entirely alone. His only rival in the presentation of gangsters, Edward G. Robinson, isn't tough, either; he is known as an art collector and lover of music (and can, incidentally, render a comic Bronx accent to perfection). But Hollywood is more accustomed to the buildup of personality. The Press agents can't quite say that Lily Languor is a heartbreaker with a capital B and four dashes for the unprintable letters; but if John Wholesome's next picture shows him in a particularly manly role, you can be sure that the public will be asked to

believe that the part is peculiarly sympathetic to Mr. Wholesome's nature. The net result of this sort of thing can be dangerous; Paul Muni, who is an actor, is being handed over to the public as a sort of dedicated votary of high thoughts who doesn't create the part of Zola, but is "living the part". If he can live the part, he doesn't need any talent whatever.

The toughness of James Cagney is a particularly pleasant thing on the screen because it is created; it is the result of a talent, not of "personality". But there is plenty of toughness behind it—tough mental fibre, a hard-headed, bunkless, alert temperament. I use the word "temperament" because it is correct, because the central fact about Cagney is the outlook on the world developed by his experience and character; but it has nothing whatever to do with the "artistic temperament", an ancient fake raised to semi-divinity in recent years by our clamour for picturesque personalities. The artistic temperament led a notable, now dead, movie star to demand in his written contract that he should not be required to sit on cold stone benches; the artistic temperament is always busy about private things and never about art. It leads pretty and popular actresses to break contracts with their studios because "they aren't giving me suitable stories" which usually means (*a*) that the actress is being asked to act, instead of exploiting her charms; or (*b*—and more annoying) that some other actress has been assigned to a particularly rich rôle. Cagney got out of a contract, too, but it wasn't for reasons like that. He was being put into too many pictures of the same sort (which prevented him from giving any range to his acting) and he was making more pictures than he felt able to make. His way of breaking the contract was to take it to the courts. And for over a year he was virtually outside the pale of Hollywood because he won his battle. If it hadn't been for the accidental formation of a new company which needed his talent, he would have made no pictures during the time he fought for his rights. It was a hard thing for an actor to do, and the hardest thing for Cagney to bear was that he wasn't working. He wasn't penniless, but the amount he lost by not working regularly was enough to frighten most of us at income-tax time; I suppose that bothered him, but I know it was never uppermost in his mind. He wanted earnestly to get back to work; he is back now, with his old company, Warners, and the pictures announced for him are excellent. The first one, in fact, is *Boy Meets Girl* (for which the Spewacks have, I am told, improved their flawless original).

His compact little body is agile and graceful; he was a hoofer and a good one; his eyes are bright and darting (they are one of the most effective elements in his work on the screen); his voice is not at all exceptional, but he can suddenly lower it to express emotion or to throw a jet of corrosive acid over what he has said before, so that you have to wait for the end of whatever he is saying to make sure whether he means it, or is kidding it. Most famous, and most effective, are his hands, with which he has built up a series of singularly private, singularly communicative, gestures. I found, in talking to him, that at the end of fifteen minutes I was unconsciously imitating his movements, especially the little shake of his hands, held breast-high, which occurs at least once in most of his pictures. I thought I had better be frank about it, so that he didn't imagine I was burlesquing him, and asked him how he had developed that particular gesture. He said, "I'm never conscious of it." It is, in fact, the one movement he makes without knowing it, the only one not directly growing out of the character he plays; and I shouldn't be surprised if he dropped it for that reason. What pleased me was his refusal to build up the opportunity I offered him, to deliver a mystical statement on the actor's art. (He was once asked to deliver an hour's lecture on the subject and, privately, gave a series of devastating imitations of its most famous practitioners.)

Sunk deep in the life story of Cagney there is one episode which may explain the totally unhistrionic impression he makes: he was a bell hop at the Friars Club in New York. He saw actors at close range, in private life among other actors; which means that he saw them acting their heads off. He got from them no ambition to be an actor himself; he wanted to be an artist. But when he became an actor, he at least knew where to act—on the stage. He never picked up any of the snobbery of the stage, either.

For his fourth picture, they gave him *Public Enemy*, so the world may give thanks to Darryl Zanuck, who was then in charge of production at Warner's and who had suddenly discovered that the gangsters were first-class picture material. (You bet they were: they were the Western and the serial rolled into one, with headlines instead of history in the background.) There he was, this bantam, lean and swift in his movements, being tough and standing up to hard men; he was so good that for a time he wiped off the record all the photographs we had ever seen of actual gangsters; he was so good that he created one of the extremely rare exceptions to the rule that what you remember of a talking picture is always something seen, not something heard; his cry near the very end, "Maybe I wasn't so tough!" is remembered; but best of all is the total memory of the figure moving, with concentrated purpose, knowing where to go and what to get, and going and getting it.

After that, they had him slapping women around (the grape-fruit in the face was in *Public Enemy*) until it became news when a woman slapped him in a picture; they had him playing hard and masterful little guys with Pat O'Brien as his partner; they had him driving a truck or a taxi; they had him hard-beset in *Ceiling Zero*. Looking them over, you say that the films, after the first one, weren't so much; but he was in them. During his exile he made a picture in which he was a municipal inspector of weights and measures, and even that was palatable because he was there, moving.

Mr. Reinhardt who made everyone else proceed magnificently through *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was beaten by the comedians, Cagney among them, who stuck to the rhythm and pace of the movies, and were the best element in the picture. So long as Cagney is allowed to move, expressively, you have the ground-work of a good movie; he was born for the movies, because whatever he wants to say, he says by movement. His gait, the hunch of his shoulders, the way he turns, the jab of a finger, the cocking of his head, are all exactly what the movies require. There aren't half a dozen players on the screen who come within fifty feet of him in the variety and range and expressiveness of movement.

When he was in New York, just before returning to Hollywood, he spent a lot of time at the American School of the Ballet; he watched Paul Draper dance; he went to see the great master of controlled movement, Uday Shankar. I am pretty sure that if the right thing had come along at the moment, he would have returned to dancing professionally. He had danced, and well enough, in his last picture; he could say a lot, dancing. But I'm glad he went back to the pictures. No one is quite indispensable, but the movies need Cagney badly; they need the kind of intelligence about people and situations which shines through all his appearances.

That is the entertaining paradox of the whole business, that Cagney, who conceals his personality, has a thousand times the reality of those who exploit theirs. That makes him a living lesson in the art of acting—which few will bother to learn. And they won't get instruction from him, except by watching. He takes nothing to himself. On the day he saw Shankar dance, a friend took him backstage and a news photographer snapped a picture of Shankar and Cagney together. A woman, a lover of art I am sure, turned to Cagney and asked him how he got into the picture with Shankar. "I happened to be standing there," said Cagney. The woman turned away, remarking, "Oh, I thought you were someone I ought to know." "Not at all," Cagney threw after her.

But the newsboys and bootblacks on the street had recognised him and shouted to him, and he had answered them, with pleasure.

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HOLLYWOOD DIARY

"You start off with a premise . ."

April 26. For ten days I have been sitting around in my two-room office, waiting for some producer on the lot to call me up and put me to work on a script. Every morning I walk the distance from my apartment on Orchid Avenue and appear at the studio promptly at nine. The other writers pass my window an hour or so later, see me ready for work in my shirt sleeves and suspenders, and yell jovially "Scab." But I don't want to miss that phone call.

I sent my secretary back to the stenographic department and told her I'd call her when I needed her. It was embarrassing with the two of us just sitting there and waiting.

Naturally I can't expect an organization of this size to stop everything until I'm properly placed, but they pay me two hundred dollars a week, and I do nothing to earn it. Himmer, my agent, tells me I'm getting "beans" and have no reason to think of the waste of money.

The main thing is not to grow demoralized and cynical.

A letter came from home: "Hollywood must be different and exciting. Which actress are you bringing East for a wife?"

In the evening I walk down Hollywood Boulevard with all the other tourists, hoping for a glimpse of Carole Lombard and Adolphe Menjou. And after I get tired of walking I drop into a drugstore, where, with the lonely ladies from Iowa, I secretly drink a thick strawberry soda.

April 27. The telephone rang to-day but it was only the parking-lot attendant across the street. He wanted to know why I hadn't been using the parking space the studio assigned to me. I explained I had no car, which left him bewildered.

The truth is I can't buy one. When I left New York I owned a five-dollar bill and had to borrow six hundred dollars from my agent to pay my debts and get out here respectably.

My agent is collecting his six hundred dollars in weekly instalments of fifty dollars. Also taking nips out of my check are his twenty dollar weekly commission, the Cali-

He got two hundred dollars a week—working for "beans" his agent called it—a two-roomed office, a stenographer and no work to do. But he was kicking just the same, and complained of a weird, dreamlike feeling.

Daniel Fuchs, American author of *Neptune's Beach* and *Homage to Blenholt*, gives a day-to-day account of a writer's sojourn in Hollywood, the authors' Shangri La: afternoon tea, a nap, and malted milk with three scoops of ice cream

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fornia unemployment tax, the federal old-age relief tax, and the Motion Picture Relief Fund, so that what actually comes to me isn't two hundred dollars at all, and it would take some time to get enough money together for a car.

With all these cuts I'm still making more money than I ever earned per week. Just the same, I'm kicking. The trouble is I suppose, that it's misleading to think of salary in weekly figures when you work on the movies. Hardly anyone works fifty-two weeks a year; my own contract lasts thirteen weeks.

Still no telephone calls from any producer.

April 28. Himmer, my agent, dropped in. He doesn't seem worried by inactivity. "The check comes every week, doesn't it?" he asks. "It's good money, isn't it?"

April 29. I was put to work this morning. Mara, a sad-looking man who produces B pictures for the studio, asked me to do a "treatment" of a story called *No Bread to Butter*. This is an "original"—a twenty-page synopsis of a picture for which the studio paid fifteen hundred dollars. Mara had put some other writers to work on treatments, but hadn't liked what they'd done any better than he liked the original. I didn't understand at all. Why had he bought *No Bread to Butter* if it was no good, I asked him. Mara smoked his cigar patiently for a while. "Listen," he said, "do I ask you personal questions?"

He wouldn't tell me what was wrong with the original or what he wanted. "The whole intention in the matter is to bring on a writer with a fresh approach. If I talk, you'll go to work with preconceived notions in your head. Tell the story as you see it and we'll see what comes out."

I went back to my office. *No Bread to Butter* seems to be a badly manufactured story, but I'm anxious to see what I can do with it. I feel good, a regular writer now, with an assignment. It appears to worry the other writers that I have found something to do at last. They seemed fonder of me when I was just hanging around.

I phoned Himmer to tell him the good news. "See?" he said. "Didn't I tell you I'd take care of it? You let me handle everything and don't worry." He talked with no great enthusiasm.

May 5. The boys tell me I'm a fool to hand in my treatment so soon. Two or three weeks are the minimum time, they say, but I was anxious to get the work done to show Mara what I could do. Mara's secretary said I should hear from him in the morning.

May 6. Mara did not phone.

May 10. No phone.

May 11. No phone.

May 12. Mr. Barry phoned. He's assistant to the vice-president in charge of production and represents the front office. He called me at my apartment last night, after work. "Listen here, kid," he said, "I've been trying to reach you at your home all day. You've been out on the Coast a month now. Don't you think its time you showed up on the lot?"

I protested, almost tearfully.

Seems that the administration building checked up on the absences of writers by the report sent in by the parking-lot attendant. Since I had no car, I hadn't been checked in. I explained, but Barry hung up, sounding unconvinced.

May 13. Nothing.

The malted milks in this town are made with three full scoops of ice cream. Opulence.

May 14. Mara finally called me in to-day, rubbed his nose for a few minutes, and then told me my treatment was altogether too good. "You come in with a script," he explained. "It's fine, it's subtle, it's serious. It's perfect—for Gary Cooper, not for my kind of talent."

I tried to get Mara to make a stab at the script anyhow, but nothing doing. Naturally, I'm not especially depressed.

May 17. Barry, front-office man, called me up again, this time at my office. He told me Mara had sent in an enthusiastic report on me. I was a fine writer—"serious"—and fit only for A producers. Barry, who is taking "personal charge" of me, told me to see St. John, one of the company's best producers.

St. John's secretary made an appointment for me for the morning. She seemed to know who I was.

May 18. St. John gave me a cordial welcome and told me he's been wanting to do a historical frontier picture but has been held up because he can't find the right character. He's been hunting for three years now and asked me to get to work on the research.

I told him frankly I didn't imagine I'd be very successful with this, but he brushed my objections aside.

I'm back at the office and don't know exactly what to do. I don't want to spend time on anything as flimsy as this assignment. Nevertheless, I phoned the research department and asked them to send me everything they had on the early West. This turns out to be several very old books on Texas. I go through them with no great interest.

May 19. Still Texas. Sometimes, when I stop to see myself sitting in a room and reading books on Texas, I get a weird, dreamlike feeling.

Frank Coleman, one of the writers I've come to know, dropped in and asked me to play a little casino with him, five cents a hand. We played for about half an hour.

May 21. Inter-office memo from St. John: "The front office tells me their program for the year is full and they have no room for an expensive frontier picture. Sorry."

I WAS struck again with the dreamlike quality of my work here.

Frank Coleman, who dropped in for some casino, explained St. John's note. When a writer goes to work for a producer, the writer's salary is immediately attached to the producer's budget. St. John simply didn't want to be responsible for my salary.

[*Continued on next page*

At any rate, I'm glad to be free of the Texas research.

May 24. Barry, front-office man, sent me to another producer, Marc Wilde, who gave me the full shooting script of *Dark Island*, which was made in 1926 as a silent picture. "My thought," said Wilde, "is to shoot the story in a talking version. However, before I put you to work on it, I want to find out what you think of it, whether you care to work on it, etc. So read it."

May 25. I didn't like *Dark Island* at all, but I didn't want to antagonize Wilde by being too outspoken. I asked him what he thought of it. "Me?" Wilde asked. "Why ask me? I haven't read the script."

Coleman and I play casino every afternoon now.

May 26. I've been coming to work at nine-thirty lately and to-day I walked in at ten. All the boys seem to like me now, and it is well-intentioned friendship, too. They pick me up at twelve for lunch at the commissary, where we all eat at the "round table". That is, the lesser writers ($100–$500) eat at a large round table. The intermediates ($500–$750) eat privately or off the lot. The big shots eat at the executives' table along with top-flight stars and producers. They shoot crap with their meals.

We're at lunch from twelve to two. Afterwards we tour the lot for an hour or so in the sunshine, just walking around and looking at the sets in the different barns. Then it takes us a half-hour to break up at the doorway to the writers building. When we finally go to our separate offices the boys generally take a nap. I took one, too, to-day. Coleman comes in at four for half hour's play at the cards and then we meet the other boys again at the commissary for afternoon tea, which amounts to a carbonated drink called 7 up. This leaves me a few minutes for these notes; I put my hat on and go home.

May 28. My finger nails seem to grow very rapidly. It may be the climate or simply because I have more time to notice them.

June 1. Very lazy. I read picture magazines from 10.30 until 12. After that the day goes fast enough.

June 3. The story editor called me up to-day and said that Kolb wants to see me. Kolb is second or third-ranking producer on the lot: when I mentioned the news to the boys, they all grew silent and ill at ease with me. No casino, no tour, no tea.

Appointment with Kolb in the morning. Himmer, who dropped in, seemed impressed. "Kid," he said, "this is your big chance."

June 4. Kolb strikes me as a man who knows what he wants and how to get it. He is a short man, conscious of his shortness. He stands on his toes when he talks for the sake of the height, and punches out his words.

It seems that I have to take a special course of instruction with him before he will put me to work. We spent an hour to-day in friendly conversation, mainly an autobiographical sketch of Kolb, together with lessons drawn therefrom for my own knowledge. I'm to return to his office after the week-end.

Coleman passed me and didn't speak.

June 6. To-day Kolb described his system to me. You start off with a premise.

"Just for the sake of example," he said, "you take a girl who always screams when she sees a milkman. See, she's got a grudge against the milkman because a dearly beloved pet dog was once run over by a milk cart." Something like that—good comedy situation. Only, first you must invent a springboard. This is the scene which starts the picture, and Kolb wants it intriguing, even mystifying. "I'm not afraid of any man, big or small," he said, "but I shake in my shoes when that skinny little guy in the movie theatre begins to reach under the seat for his hat." The function of the springboard is to hold the skinny man in his seat. "For example, purely for example, suppose we show the boy when the picture opens. See, he's walking into the Automat. He goes to the cake slot. He puts in two nickels or three nickels, as the case may be. The slot opens and out comes—the girl! Is that interesting? Will the skinny guy take the hat? No, he wants to know how that girl got there and what's going to happen now."

Kolb started to continue with the complications his springboard made possible, but was still fascinated by the Automat girl. He considered for a while and then said "What the hell. It's nuts." Then he seemed to lose interest in the lesson. "Listen," he finally said, "the best way to know what I want is to see the actual products. You go down and see the stuff I've made." He told his secretary to make arrangements.

June 7. Kolb's secretary sent me to a projection room, where I was shown three of his pictures. I understand what Kolb means by springboards. His pictures all begin very well, some times with shock, but the rest of the plot is a mess because it has to justify the outrageous beginning.

June 8. Kolb's secretary phoned and told me I was to see three more Kolb *Operas*. I sit all by myself in a projection room, thinking of Ludwig of Bavaria in his exclusive theatre, and feeling grand too.

What impresses me is the extent to which these pictures duplicate themselves, not only in the essential material, but in many details of character, gags, plot, etc.

June 9. Three more pictures to-day.

June 10. More Kolb masterpieces. He has been in movies for twenty years and must have made a hundred pictures.

June 14. To-day I was rescued from the projection room and was put to work. Kolb really shone with enthusiasm for the assignment he was giving me.

His idea was to rewrite a picture he did two years ago called *Dreams at Twilight*. If it pulled them in once, he said, it would pull them in again. *Dreams at Twilight* involved a dashing, light-hearted hero who was constantly being chased by a flippant-minded girl. The hero deeply loved the girl, but avoided her because he was prejudiced against matrimony. "Sweet premise," Kolb said. "It's got charm, see what I mean?"

In addition to outwitting the heroine, the hero is fully occupied in the course of the picture: he is a detective and has a murder to solve.

"Now," said Kolb, "we remake the picture. *But*—instead of having the dashing boy detective, we make it a dashing girl this time. In other words, we make the picture in reverse. How's that for a new twist?"

He stood back in triumph and regarded my face for shock.

"Know why I'm changing the rôles?" he whispered. His whole manner suddenly became secretive. "This picture is for Francine Waldron!"

I began to tremble gently, not because Waldron was one of the three most important actresses in Hollywood but because Kolb's mood was contagious and I had to respond as a matter of common politeness. When he saw the flush of excitement on my face deepen on my face, he sent me off to work. He told his secretary to put me on a budget.

June 15. I finished a rough outline of the Waldron script, working hard on it—nine to five, and no drifting about the lot. It's a bare sketch but I'd like to get Kolb's reaction on it before going ahead. His secretary, however, told me that Mr. Kolb was all tied up at the moment.

I'm going ahead, filling in the outline rather than waste the time.

June 18. Phoned Kolb's secretary, but he's still busy.

That peculiar feeling of dreamy suspension is very strong with me lately.

June 20. "Hollywood Reporter" notes that Kolb has bought a property called *Nothing for a Dime*. It is described as a stop story in which a girl plays the part of a debonair detective usually assigned to a man.

What's going on?

June 21. Finished a forty-page treatment of the Waldron script and asked Kolb's secretary to show this to him, since he couldn't see me. She said he would get it immediately and would let me know very shortly.

June 22. Begins nothing again.

June 23. Nothing.

June 24. Frank Coleman dropped in for casino—a depressing sign.

June 25. Barry of the front office, called me in for a long personal interview. He told me that I was respected as a fine writer, held in high regard. Was everything—office accommodations—suitable in every way? Then he said that the studio was putting me entirely on my own, allowing me to work without restrictions or supervision. The point was, I was an artist and could work without shackles.

At this point I interrupted and told him about the script I had written for Kolb.

"Kolb?" Barry asked. "Who says you're working for Kolb? He has not got you listed as one of his writers. You've been marked 'available' for twenty-four days now."

Nevertheless, I insisted that the story editor had sent me to Kolb, I had worked with him, and was waiting to see what he thought of my story. Barry didn't understand at all. "K." he said uncertainly. "I'll see Kolb at once, and clear this all up."

More and more confusing. What impresses me though, is that I don't feel bewildered or affected in any way. It's as though I'm not the one who's concerned here. Other days, other places, I should have been, to put it mildly, raving. However, I did phone Himmer, my agent. He heard me out and said he would scout around and that I was not to worry.

June 29. Barry phoned. He had seen Kolb and Kolb didn't like my script. Would I please get to work on my unrestricted, unsupervised assignment?

I didn't quite know how to begin on a thing like that and so I decided to make a beginning after the week-end. Went to the commissary for a soda and bumped into Kolb himself coming out. He beamed kindly at me. "Kid, I know what it is to wait around," he said. "I'm awfully busy at the moment but sooner or later I'll get around to reading your script." He patted my shoulder and left.

June 30. Himmer dropped in. "About that Kolb," he said. "I picked up the inside story. See, what it was was this: when Kolb put you on to his budget he called up to find out what your salary was. That's how he found out you get two hundred."

"So?"

"So. Kolb figures he deserves the best writers on the lot. He told them he wouldn't put up with any two-hundred dollar trash. Its a natural reaction."

We both sat there for a while, passing time and talking about the administration in Washington.

"By the way," Himmer asked, "what kind of a story did Kolb have you work on?"

"A business for Francine Waldron."

Himmer laughed genially. "Waldron has no commitments on this lot. She doesn't work here, you know."

We both laughed pleasantly at the strange mind Kolb had and what went on in it.

July 1. Nothing worth noting.

July 12. I asked Coleman over casino how the front office told you that you were fired. "They don't tell you," Coleman said. "They're supposed to pick up options two weeks before the contract expires. If they don't, they don't. That's all.

The two-week period with me began some days ago.

July 14. I keep coming to work, although I understand this isn't really necessary. But it's pleasant to see the boys who are touching in the solicitude for me.

July 15. I came to work at ten-thirty this morning and found a genial, eager chap sitting at my desk in his shirtsleeves. "There must be some mistake," he stammered. "I'm new here. They told me to take this office."

I assured him there was no mistake. He seemed to be a fine fellow, sincere and impatient to start work. We sat around and chatted for an hour or so.

While I cleaned up my desk, he had the embarrassed tact to leave me alone.

★ ★

Article by Daniel Fuchs reproduced by kind permission of 'The New Yorker'. Drawings by David Guynn.

"From all appearances you would think she had spent her life undressing . . ."

HOW to UNDRESS

Sex rears its ugly head. Glen "Peeping Tom" Norris commentates on Hollywood's most ballyhood short of the year and answers the protesting namby-pambies of Fleet Street.

LONDON in the "dead" season of 1938. Empty streets, empty seats. In gold and marble foyers, long-faced cinemanagers glaring at knitting box-office girls. Inside, row upon row of blue plush staring up at Garbo, Gable, Donald Duck. When sun sparkles on summer blue water, there's no "beating the heat!" But there is! Just a few old ladies chattering about indecency over willow-pattern cups. Just a few news critics with nothing better to write about screaming CRUDE! VULGAR! DIRT! Just a titillating title on the hoardings. Hushed streets fill with a murmur of queues. STANDING ONLY. HOUSE FULL. Cinemanagers' hearts beat again to the rhythm of clinking shillings and half-crowns. Where Garbo, Gable, Donald Duck, failed, the serpent has wriggled through. Apparently thousands of Londoners want to know *How to Undress before Your Husband.*

New York in the "rush" season of 1937. Bright lights and klaxons down Broadway. Bile Beans blinking over Times Square. Leg shows in Manhattan are booming. Uncle George is razzing it while Aunt Julia is away in the country. In one of New York's smartest streamlined offices, cut off from the street by the bustle of typewriters and auditions, showman Allen Gilbert smokes a big cigar. He's the man who puts on the leg shows, and right now he's puffing and thinking. Not planning new ways of tickling Uncle George. For Allen Gilbert is going to have a crack at branching out into the noble world of education.

Next day in the smart, streamlined office. The "gentlemen of the press" lounging in chromium chairs. Behind a vast ebony and glass desk, Allen Gilbert, leaning back until his smoke rings blow straight up at the ceiling. He tips forward, sits up, leans seriously across his desk: "Gentlemen, I want to announce the formation of my school: The Allen Gilbert School of Undressing. I intend to enrol wives anxious to improve their marital manners, teach them the correct way to take off their clothes. Frankly, gentlemen, I am doing this as a social measure. I feel that many a marriage ends in the divorce court because the wife grows sloppy and careless in the bedroom. Already 48 wives, who suspect there is something wrong with their disrobing methodology, have signed up for my $30(£6) course of six lessons. From some of my best show girls they will learn how to transform the act of going to bed from a routine chore into a thing of charm, pleasure, and excitement. Gentlemen"—and Mr. Gilbert rises—"I am dedicating my school to the sanctity of the American home."

The lights flash out across Times Square. Posters flapping round the legs of shouting newsboys. Allen Gilbert in the headlines: pictures from his school splashing the front pages. Dark, demure "Professor" Connie Fonzlau demonstrating the wrong way: pulling her frock off over her head, letting her stockings wrinkle down over her ankles, showing too much too soon. Gay, blonde "Professor" June St. Clair showing the right way: snaking her frock down over her hips, rolling her stockings down, donning her nightgown and dropping her lingerie all in one magic motion. From coast to coast, America goggles, then smirks, then sniggers—and then comes the kick-back.

Three weeks after publishing the pictures, American weekly *Life* prints sample letters:

"I am thoroughly ashamed of you. Men have enough of a problem to keep their minds clean. Such pictures will not make their struggle for moral mastery any easier."

"My Gawd—ain't there nothin' sacred no more!"

"Why only the married women?"

"What about the husbands? How to get out of shirt and pants and into pyjamas 'all in one magic motion'? Are you sponsoring the return of the night shirt?"

Life takes up the challenge, sends out one of its female photographers to shoot the male disrobing. A bepaunched fatty removes trousers while still adorned with bowler hat and cigar, pulls his shirt over his head with one hand while back-scratching with the other, does grotesque physical jerks with a towel round his middle. By contrast, an amateur

Stills from "How to Undress"

". . . To the appreciative there is, in a scene like this, something truly uplifting . . ."

Robert Taylor smiles through every movement of turning-in with "dignity and charm."

Again the mail bags bulge:

"My young daughter, age 4, now suggests it would be nice to publish a series for children."

"Fer gawsh sakes! If you mustn't scratch in your own bedroom, where in the world can you? Or haven't you ever had an itch!!"

"The shirt should be removed before the pants. If you have a good tan and a manly chest, the vest should follow."

Hollywood, glittering through the spring of 1938. Trying to keep up the eternal brightness, and forget the shadow of the demon slump. These days, good stories are rare. Hollywood thinks the Allen Gilbert story is a good one, decides to produce a film version. It might have brought fame and fortune to Professors Fonzlau and St. Clair. But a strange coincidence gives Hollywood a far bigger break; and when the film bursts on a waiting world, its how and who makes big news.

THE pine-scented slopes of Hollywood's Beverly Hills. In a charming sun-trap bungalow, starlet Elaine Barrie is at last recovering from the strain of long months spent hurrying round the world. It was terribly tiring but tremendously touching to feel that the whole world was following every word of her romantic story. Then, as Mrs. Barrymore, she settled down to gay, carefree months basking in the glow of happy wedlock. But even the best wife must have her little secrets! Even the partner of the great lover must now and then long for a harmless headline or two! For when the screen *How to Undress* is complete, Hollywood is amazed to find that it is Elaine Barrie Barrymore, in her own name, who is showing how. The Barrymore family, elite of stage and screen, are none too happy about the film. But the public must be served, and the film survives. So at last, as the howls, yowls, squeals, and ballyhoo reach a climax, Elaine Barrie Barrymore comes to show London *How to Undress in Front of Your Husband.*

Two one and sixes, please. What, nothing cheaper than three and six! How long to wait for the two and sixes? Have to join the end of the queue. But where *is* the end? Two blocks away, round the corner! Two three and sixes, please. Thank you. The organ dies away. The rainbow curtains part. British Board of Film Censors—How to Undress—A Certificate. A gentle whistle sighs round the theatre. A title on the screen asks:

HOW ABOUT OUR WOMEN?
DO THEY SATISFY US?

Apparently the inquirer is the camera keyhole peeper, screwing up his face, distorting his body, to get angles on the ladies in the boudoir. In his darkroom, feverishly he develops the film. The voice sounds a horrible warning:

"The victim invariably ends up in the soup. Sometimes it's only the developing fluid, often it's the front page. It depends on who she is, what she did, and where she did it."

What the feverish young man finds on his negative is "Miss" Barrie, conveniently restored to the single state and bachelor quarters, returning at 6 a.m. from a Hollywood party. Judging from the grace of the Barrie glide to the dressing table, it was a very sober party. Miss Barrie begins. But just as she is about to solve the most important problem, we jump to the flat below. Miss Trixie Friganza is also returning from a party, but a much gayer one. She is magnificent. One mile round, and with a superb pair of chests. La Barrie may be a thoroughbred, but La Friganza is a stayer. So the race between them is on, with the feverish young man pointing the highlights:

"Miss Barrie is an authority on undressing . . . notice the ease and grace . . . you'd think she had spent her life undressing . . . unquestionably she has 'it' . . . for didn't she capture the world's greatest lover! She not only knows how to get a husband . . . but how to keep him!

"Ah! There should be developments here . . . no . . . I'm afraid with Miss Friganza the developing has been round.

"It isn't what you artfully reveal, but what you artfully conceal that makes disrobing an intriguing art . . . in a scene like this there's something truly uplifting . . . a persistence in maintaining the lovely little tricks that every girl practises on her first sweetheart . . . now's she about to slip out of her slip.

"Now Trixie . . . that other celebrated taker-offer shows us a few other wrinkles . . . Trixie, we're holding you up as a colossal example of bedroom finesse . . . so let's get down to foundations.

"What's going on above . . . something coming off . . . she keeps you guessing as to what she'll do next . . . a trick that invariably intrigues a husband. Ah! A soft balmy night . . . dreamy music . . . and a touch . . . just the merest touch . . . how her husband must thrill to those charms! I think Trixie's worry is about over . . . in a few moments the dreadnought will drop anchor.

"Good night, Miss Barrie . . . and pleasant dreams.

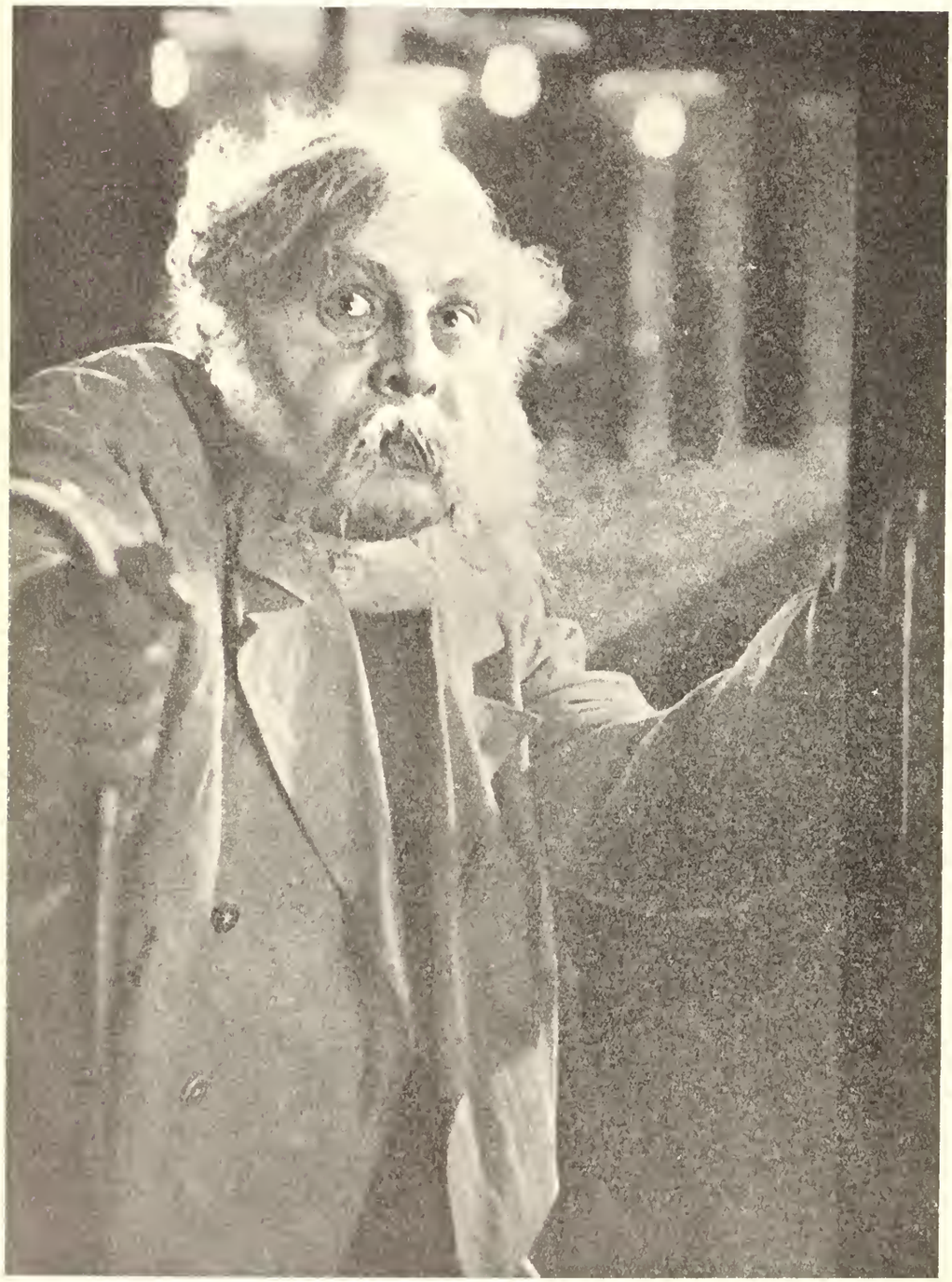
"As for you, Trixie . . . a do not disturb sign."

And with that, a junior great lover, in a top hat, with a face not unlike Charlie McCarthy, appears from under Miss Barrie's bed, and waves a charming good night to us as the scene fades away.

So America presents us with this year's Public Bellylaff No. 1. But do we take it that way? Read those headlines again. Listen to the old ladies squealing. Hark at the news critics yowling. "Nasty!" "Crude!" "Vulgar!" "Insult!" "Indecent!" Now boys, boys, pull yourselves together! Has America got the laugh on us? Or has it!

IT'S in the *SCRIPT*

says Karl Mayer, famous German writer of 'Caligari', 'The Last Laugh', 'Berlin' and 'Sunrise', in a talk with Documentary producer PAUL ROTHA



The Last Laugh. *With Emil Jannings.*

HE can't keep still. He exudes enthusiasm for this thing called movie. Ten minutes talk and you realise that he has the background, the feeling, the smell of the medium for which so many people have worked and sacrificed. Karl Mayer is one who has sacrificed.

With dictators on the Continent, you meet many movie people these days in England and America. They fall quickly into two kinds. Those who have the up-to-the-minute lowdown, the latest trade-show in mind, the last party in head and stomach, the quick entry into the producer's office. And those who know the policy guiding movies, know where the worthwhile work is being done, know what really makes picture-making important beyond its provision of jobs. They used to talk about actors and producers who loved the theatre. There are few film people who love the film. Karl Mayer is one.

An exile from Germany, this little grey-haired exuberant writer is the mind which lay behind so many of the films that earned for the German cinema between 1919 and 1926 the label of golden. He has been in England three years but, beyond advising Czinner and Bergner in a friendly way, he has been given little to do.

Shy, quiet, slow to talk about himself, I set him talking about the German cinema in its great days. Names, dates and some old stills unloosened his memory. But he was careful to explain first. The past is dead. Old films cannot really live again. The film is the film of the moment. But the creative effort, the ideas that went into old films, that is something worth recording and discussing. We agreed that movie is a matter of development, that it is profitable to remember how those developments took place and were inspired. With these terms set, Mayer talked.

He recalled what Paul Wegener's pre-War version of *The Student of Prague* (1913) registered on his mind. But, with the crisis of the War intervening, he passed on to an evening in 1919 when he was walking through the Charlottenburg suburb of Berlin in a district little-known to him. He was writing for the theatre then. Up a side street he saw a fair. A barker drew his attention to an 'electrical' man whose actions could be controlled. The idea of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was born. With Hans Janowitz, another writer, Mayer shared a flat and to Janowitz that night he told his idea. Together they wrote a story. To Erich Pommer, producer at Decla Bioskop, it was proposed.

"You must remember," diverged Mayer, "that film production in Germany was largely a matter of big-scale historical pictures. Lubitsch was making *Anne Boleyn* and *Dubarry*, Buchowetski *Danton* and *Peter the Great*. Such films were really in the tradition of the Italian spectacle films like *Cabiria* and *Quo Vadis?* Jannings, Krauss, Veidt and Pola Negri were all playing pretentious historical rôles. *Caligari* was something completely new and it is to Pommer's credit that he backed it."

Pommer had no time to read the story after lunch but Mayer insisted on telling him the opening scenes. By teatime Pommer had bought the story. Wiene (now dead; see *W.F.N.* for August) was suggested by Pommer as director. The rest was collaborative effort, Mayer stipulates that. With the three painters, Warm, Reimann and Röhrig, a treatment was prepared. *Caligari* became celluloid and film history. Mayer regrets only that "the story within a story" was not told so simply as he had wished. The film not only started a cycle in Germany for films of the macabre with expressionist treatment but it startled the world.

Mayer tried one more story in this Hoffmanesque manner, again with Wiene directing but Cesar Kleine doing the décor. *Genuine* was never shown in England but is described by Bardèche and Brasillach as "a very sombre affair, though entertaining enough, with cubist settings which seldom sustain their interest. The characters seemed to blend into the settings as though camouflaged and then from time to time stand out against them boldly in an extraordinary fashion".* In the same year he wrote *The Hunchback and the Dancer* for F. W. Murnau, with Karl Freund photographing. In 1922 he scripted *Vanina* from Stendhal for the late Arthur von Gerlach and likes to describe it as a film ballad.

Already he was thinking of a film which told its story by pictures alone. In the previous year he had written a film without titles for Lupu Pick's company. *Scherben*, the story of a signalman at a lonely signalbox, was also Mayer's first attempt to build a film around a central figure, an idea which has always been of great interest to him. Werner Krauss played the main part and the film attracted wide notice. Mayer began to realise the camera's function of selecting details. His scripts were written with elaborate directions to the cameraman, just such a revolution in script writing as were Shaw's detailed stage directions in his plays in the '90's. "I wrote my script," says Mayer, "through the camera." Again without titles, *Hintertreppe* was a backstreet story which made great use of symbolic detail, ideas which later were to be taken up by Stroheim in *Greed* and Chaplin in *Woman of Paris*. It started a vogue for backstreet films and was followed by Karl Grune's *The Street* (which lacked Mayer's imagination) and later by the films of Pabst and Bruno Rahn.

Always progressing, Mayer then became interested in the screen presentation of time. With Lupu Pick he discussed many experiments which resulted in *Sylvester* (*New Year's Eve*) in which, again without titles, again with one main character, he told the story of exactly sixty minutes before midnight in exactly one hour's screen time. In the same way that the signalman's lantern was used as a *leitmotif* in *Scherben*, the clock in the town square dominated *Sylvester*. Mayer felt that the film must be seen through the clock, that the clock must "somehow be made to approach the camera". From that idea and from a primitive little trolley built specially by cameraman Guido Seeber at the Staaken studio, have come all the camera dollies and camera cranes that function in almost every film made to-day. Hollywood was to seize voraciously the idea of moving its cameras but not until it had seen Mayer's next film—the famous *Last Laugh*. The script as usual had detailed instructions that the camera was to truck and fly. Mayer visualised and wrote everything through the camera which Freund handled so well. Camera and central character were linked. Originally written for Lupu Pick, the hall-porter was eventually played by Emil Jannings. *The Last Laugh* was rated one of the ten pictures of the year in America. Hollywood sent for the script and studied it.

But Mayer was tiring at the restriction and artificiality of the studios. All these films had been wholly studio-made. Mayer lost interest in "fictional invention" and wanted his stories to "grow from reality". In 1925, standing amid the whirling traffic of the Ufa Palast am Zoo, he conceived the idea of a City Symphony. He saw "a melody of pictures" and began to write the treatment of *Berlin*. On a holiday with Lupu Pick while resting from *The Last Laugh*, he told Pick the idea. Pick contributed much practical advice—the hidden camera in the lorry. But the film went into production before Mayer was satisfied with the script. The film as Ruttmann made it was far from Mayer's conception. Its surface approach was what Mayer had tried to avoid. He and Ruttmann agreed to differ.

Still absorbed with reality, he then scripted the story of a river from source to delta and the people who lived by it. But *The Danube* was never made. Years later Lods made the story of *The Seine* and Lorentz *The Mississippi*.

The exodus from the German studios to Hollywood was in full swing. But Mayer stopped behind. From across the ocean, Fox commissioned him to write *Sunrise* from Suderman's *A Trip to Tilsit*. Mayer called it *The Song of Two People*. It was Murnau's most successful film in Hollywood.

In 1932, Mayer left Germany for good with Czinner and Bergner. With them in Paris he worked on *Ariane* and *Der Traumende Mund*. Going on in his mind all this time is the idea of the film creation of a central character for which *Sylvester*, *Scherben* and *The Last Laugh* were only note-books. He has spent months writing a story of the East End of London but, unlike his earlier films, the central character is a woman. Its background is reality. If produced, it should be another step in film technique, another achievement by the man who was one of the best brains behind what we now call the "classics" of the German cinema.

* '*The History of Motion Pictures*.' *Bardèche and Brasillach. Edited by Iris Barry* (*Norton, New York*, 1938).

It's home to us anyway

The furniture of a daydream is always costly, and perhaps this sufficiently explains why in English films the peaceful countryside is covered with Elizabethan mansions whose interiors are decorated in a style that would be considered at once too garish and too expensive by any sensible proprietor of a night club. And even when the story expressly demands, as in a fairly recent film, "a poky little flat," it is obvious that the rent of this hovel must amount to at least five hundred pounds a year. But though there may be a simple and commercial reason for all this luxury the example of French films shows that it is not absolutely necessary.

It may be that the public do not like to be reminded of their own lives and surroundings. But at the same time this persistent splendour seems to have become an idiom, a convention of the cinema, like that which once prevented the mention of a dog, except by means of a periphrasis, in French tragedy or the appearance of any but titled persons in English comedy.

It is perhaps worth remarking that there is much the same contrast in French and English painting; English painting is apt to disguise the everyday world and French painting to reveal it. When the impressionists came to London they carefully studied the illimitable vistas and Italianate glories of Turner, but themselves settled down to take views of Penge and Dulwich, which happen to be among the few works of art that really show what the more commonplace parts of England are like . . .

But the French are a frugal nation and seem to dislike seeing money wasted as much as they dislike wasting it. With a public thus enlightened by parsimony the cinema in France has become a worthy successor to the impressionist movement in painting, and its detached, accurate vision of everyday people in their natural surroundings, quite apart from the intrinsic interest of such scenes, has greatly enlarged the scope of the films. It has enabled them to present situations and characters that could never exist in the marble halls of which our cinema so persistently dreams.

To take but one simple example, the plot of a recent French film turned on an exquisite and amusing contrast between a provincial ballroom as it appeared to the memory of a woman and as it was in actual fact. This would have been scarcely possible in the usual consistently expensive film, where scenes of low life are only grudgingly introduced with crude burlesque and for comic relief. But even if the average films cannot often attempt adventurous plots they could at once be enlivened by a little accurate observation, and this, as our documentary films have shown, is by no means a unique capacity of the French. If the course of true love could occasionally flow outside the mansion and the night club one could attend with much greater equanimity.

Extract from The Times

The Prissy Pants of Literature

John Grierson reviews Flaherty's 'The Captain's Chair'

A scene from 'Nanook of the North'

Robert Flaherty

To place Flaherty as a story teller, you should hear him roll them among his peers, in igloos, mining camps, Hudson's Bay posts, and what have you in Papeete. Failing that, the Coffee House Club in New York, the Canadian Club that was on Madison Avenue, or the Cafe Royal, London, Eng., will do. But by that time the greatest of the lively arts is taking a header into literature. *The Captain's Chair* is a full nose-dive into the pool, and when Flaherty takes a header into anything, the splash is liable to affright walruses and topple icebergs half way to the Pole.

No better visual description was ever written. The metaphor is brilliant. The central conception—of how one man's vanity broke the law of the sea and the spirit of a ship and brought disaster to the great Bay—is the sort of thing that makes classics. The form, like Melville's, is the form of a story teller who has seen men in most places and heard them speak: a vast plain of individual narratives. It is like seeing the farms of the West cohere themselves across horizons and call themselves Saskatchewan. The individual narratives build up like bricks till you have a monu-

ment to the bravery of mankind, which is rare in literature to-day.

Literature is to-day lousy with ideas, grumblings of the bowels, worries. It is smart and slick and nothing without its prissy pants of skilled execution; it is dull with meaning well, or it is exhibitionist with heavy, deliberate style. It is all so bloody priestley, or eliot, or huxley.

I confess for one, and without shame, that when I want my literature nowadays I read Dizzy Dean, the Chicago Cubs' pitcher, and how the Cincinnati Reds started to get touch "so I beared down"; or Gene Fowler describing the death of Tammen, that merry and noble old shyster of Denver; or William Hickey on the famous Rawlings lunch at the Dorchester; or Bill Considine on how Baer got religion and how the dream voices spoke to little Maxie on his moral responsibilities; or the local reporter—was it in Alberta?—who described the rain on the fields about him, after eight years' drought and the plagues of Egypt, and said he was seeing the stars of heaven; or the World-Telegram man who came back from the Louis-Schmeling fight, and caught the night's deadline with 5,000 words about the joy in Harlem that was pure Defoe.

It seems to me that these fellows write the pants off the members of our Academy. They have their eye on the ball. Against the brightness of their vision and the seen image, the Academes are professional and distant, shadow-of-a-shadow people, and the sort of people you kick out of sensible republics. I go with Gogarty and say education is a fearful thing when the graphiti on the lavatory walls go political, and it is the same with writing. "I have grown weary of the adventures of novelists, for they are inventions, and not of the highest heaven at that," says Gogarty. I would not mind if literature did not reflect a death of humanism which is probably the basic disaster of our day. Fascism, Bolshevism, Democracy: listen to the theories flapping like wet fish all over the place. It makes you weep when the good raw stuff of story telling is going to waste in the pubs and the villages, and most everywhere.

But here is Flaherty to say what I mean. I can't tell how much Flaherty knows about literature, except that he is liable now and again to slip his eagle eye over the British Museum and start ordering you to read Plutarch. One thing he does know, is that it should not taste like puffed wheat, and that is revolutionary enough in these days of dreary writing. I have to confess that I can read *The Captain's Chair* without dying of wind in the stomach. And what is it but just a lot of life and a lot of death straggling out into the coastal outline of the North—a Dane who puts all his money in a ship and drives it ashore by mistake, and elects to live in it thereafter, with the deck all cockeyed and the winds of hell blowing through the gaping timbers—the epic ten-year Odyssey of Comock the Eskimo, whose friend loses his wife in an ice split, goes mad, and has to be murdered, with Flaherty, the old Greek, putting the murder off-stage, and keeping his story on the eyes of the madman. Or it is Nucktie the Owl, the sissy Eskimo with the frizzled hair who had to see God to keep the tribal focus on him, and of course duly saw him, and how his fellow Eskimos got wise to the racket and began to see God too. And, keeping the narratives together, there is the story of the ship whose spirit broke: getting round the Bay and getting later and later, the rumours flying—God knows how—over a million square miles of advancing winter, the human disasters popping off like corks one after another all along the coasts of the Bay, and the sound of men screaming as loud as a war. I doubt if there are half a dozen writers in English who could match the scale of it.

But here to confess a fault. You have this gap between the story tellers who have the material and the prissy pants experts who haven't even a sense of smell. I would sooner have the good reporter miss the big shape than have the big shape without the reporter's eye, but, as in Zola and Melville, one needs both to have the miracle. I watch Flaherty as he makes the jump across that gap. He has, you might think, everything. The conception is big, the material is rich, the eye is in the school of Dante. But he jumps short and misses. The big material and the visual writing to beat the band hang loosely together. I got a picture of Minnesota going north out of it, as I saw it the other day. The lakes, the sloughs are separated in pools, and the Red River winds slowly through. But Minnesota going south is the Mississippi and its tributaries taking a world of water with them. Works of art like that are seldom enough, but they happen.

I shall remember two things about *The Captain's Chair* for long enough. One is the description of the iceberg that went crazy and came against the wind. "A berg howling and sobbing from every cave and pock and cavern as it came on dead against the gale, passed not a deck's width to one side." The other is the story of Nucktie the book did not quite tell.

I have a definite grudge about Nucktie, because I have heard Flaherty tell it in an atmosphere less rarefied than literature, and it told for an hour and a half brilliantly, and piled up into a Voltairean laugh about God and religion, which was anything but blasphemous. I will swear that Flaherty in telling it did not care a tinker's curse whether it was Voltaire or Disney, so long as the fun was good. But dressing by the right and being literature has burdened even that old prospector's broad shoulders. The ease of detail has gone, and not caring a tinker's curse whether it is Voltaire or Disney, and old Nucktie runs out as merely a good laugh on Buchman and the Oxford Movement, which, one must confess, is not first league Voltairean laughing at all. After all there was the Canadian parson who did it very effectively already. "You are holding something back from me, So-and-so," says Buchman, putting on the old pressure. "By God, I am," says So-and-so, "by God, I am."

I feel like saying that, great and exciting as Flaherty's book is, I would sooner have my story-telling on the yon side of the Cafe Royal's red plush; that we might as well stick to reporting and films and story-telling for our pleasure, and the hell with the books; that for a personal preference, I would sooner have my Flaherty straight than watered by any inhibiting processes of literature whatsoever. But with now so many more like Flaherty barging their way into writing, it may be that a brave thing is happening. Perhaps a school of the picaresque, in which men write as they talk, is coming up. It would be the greatest blessing of our day, for we have been listening to women and dead men for long enough.

* * *

'The Captain's Chair' is published by Hodder & Stoughton, and is priced 7/6.

Black Extras

Many of these extras were born among the swamps that engulf the African hinterland. Many were born beneath the tram wires that enmesh the East End.

But once removed by way of the stoke-hold, twice removed through the dockside slum, three times removed under the cabaret lights, it makes no difference. The jungle casts its shadow across their footprints.

A guinea a day sets them running between the *Old Bones* set and *The Four Feathers* set at Denham, and it's half a guinea extra if you take a piccaninny to play in the sand. That's big money. More than you can earn in a month selling monkey skins to the traders.

One from the night-clubs is in a fashionable suit grinning at the other gabbling a native tongue. One takes his tea elegantly on a chair. The other squats on the grass, holding his cup in both hands. One must be made blacker by the make-up man. The other is black enough.

Stripped of the latest style and the seaman's reach-me-down one handles the spear and shield with embarrassment, the other naturally, surely.

But when the drum beats louder, louder, and naked feet stamp up the dust faster, faster, it's blood and not birthright that surges forth to sway the scene.

Light negro, dark negro, city negro, kraal negro—they dance as one.

They have forgotten the arc lamps, the cameras, the next train back to town. The shallow present recedes with tumult into the black past.

Mackenzie Porter—*The Evening Standard.*

GIVE US LAMOUR

Alexander Shaw, who made 'Five Faces of Malaya', chides Paramount for their new film 'Booloo.'

Sex, not Sakai, is Hollywood's meat, he urges, and cries for more jungle princesses and Tarzans.

The Hurricane (*United Artists*)

HOLLYWOOD has added yet another page to its peculiar ethnographical encyclopædia. The inscrutable Chinese, the passionate Arab, the mad Hungarian, the philandering French and all the other dear familiar races are now joined by the Savage Sakai. He is a new arrrival but he should do well as he's got a lot of things the others haven't got—poison darts, for instance, and a blow gun.

Booloo, Paramount's new all-horror-and-no-honesty jungle epic takes us to Malaya, the country of these Sakai. The only Malaya anybody knows about is inhabited by Mr. Somerset Maugham's bridge-playing gang so, once in the jungle, Paramount has a clear field to go ahead and entertain us. This is the story they tell. The Imperial Exploration Society of London has removed the bronze plaque of a famous explorer from its walls. His son, Capt. Rogers, sets out to avenge his father's honour by proving that the paternal stories of Sakais sacrificing beautiful maidens to a white tiger are true. But first he must put on his uniform to say good-bye to his loved one, for she is a British colonel's daughter, even if she has an American accent. Time and space are not to sever them completely, though, for into the jungle he will take a short-wave radio set to link him daily with civilisation and the beloved.

Booloo (*Paramount*)

(*Paramount*)

Arrived in Malaya (good authentic shots on Singapore railway station), he leaves the military outpost at Kuala Kangsar and sets out into the heart of the jungle.

Passing every variety of animal on his way he arrives in Sakai country where, into the middle of a short-wave conversation with his fiancée, cuts the voice of tragedy. One of his guides sees the white tiger, the Sakais disconnect the generator and the fiancée is left at the end of a dead line with doom ringing in her ears. Aldershot and the jungle are cut off.

Alone in the jungle, his guide dead at his feet with three poisoned darts in his chest, Rogers decides to carry on. Eventually he sees a maiden offered as a sacrifice, he rescues her, kills the white tiger and is himself captured and tortured. In the nick of time a body of British troops arrive (Come on, you fellows!) and Rogers is saved.

His father's plaque is reinstated and the Exploration Society are left with the problem presented by the presence of the beautiful sacrifice, sarong-clad, in their London boardroom.

That's fine. Dozens of good films have been made out of worse stories than that. But this time the Hollywood boys haven't even tried. They have just sat back and left it to the animals of which there are so many that it is a wonder how they all manage to get into one jungle.

It's like a Zoo. No suspense, no excitement — tiger — panther — sledang — one — two — three. All looking magnificent—they always do—and cross cut with the inevitable mother monkeys and their so-cute babies.

The actors, apparently giving up all hope of competing with the animals, hurry through their various parts in a flat, wooden manner. The dialogue is terrible and gives them no help whatsoever; one has a strong feeling that it was only written to fill in the gaps between the roar of the tiger and the snarl of the leopard.

Booloo could be dismissed as a stupid but harmless joke but there is a more serious side to the matter.

THERE *is* a group of people in the Malayan jungle known as Sakai, there *is* a place called Kuala Kangsar, and Paramount sent a unit to Malaya to shoot authentic material. In fact, they ask you to believe that the whole background is real and true.

A pictorial supplement to the Straits Budget, December 2nd, 1937, shows location stills under the heading 'Jungle thrills in Singapore' and says: "About a quarter of an hour from the heart of Singapore, Clyde Elliot's Paramount *Booloo* unit was recently on location making jungle scenes that will thrill audiences all over the world."

Strange that Paramount should have gone to the expense of sending a unit to film material in Singapore which they could have shot themselves on their own Hollywood lot and done a sight better.

And there is another mystery. Somebody went into the jungle with a camera because there are five shots of real Sakai in the film as well as one or two authentic jungle scenes. Why was so little of the real material used?

Why didn't Paramount do the thing properly? Either they should have made it a slap-up adventure film with a couple of stars, some idols, plenty of half-clad beauties and lots of crocodiles, or they should have made an honest film on the lines of *Chang* or *White Shadows*. Why send a unit into the jungle and then use a few minutes of the resulting material? Why visit one of the most interesting and little-known races in the world and then film a gang of natives picked up in Singapore crashing about the jungle like a troop of demented girl guides and call them Sakai?

In Malaya fact is more interesting than any fiction. The cry of the gibbons at dawn in the jungle, the distant sound that might be a tiger and the fresh tracks of wild elephants across the often-used footpath; these are more exciting than any Zoo close-up. Medicine men in each tribe have their tiger familiars whom they use to help the tribe in its struggle against the forces of Nature. During their dances the medicine man will go into a state of dissociation and be possessed by the tiger. Surely here there is material for the movie camera.

Very few people in the world have ever seen any of the Sakai tribes and they are slowly but surely decreasing in numbers. What a film could have been made on the subject of a dying race, harried by commercial interests and driven from their hunting grounds by Game Laws and Forestry Preservation Acts. With their blow-pipes and fire-making, their strange dances and animistic beliefs, they are a fit subject for a Flaherty. Superb jungle settings, a good-looking native race, strange customs—what more could Hollywood have wanted? Why did they leave it all and set up their cameras on Reformatory Road, Singapore?

As for the 'terrible Sakai'—during the time I spent making *Five Faces*, a film of Malaya which is now showing throughout Britain, I found these people to be charming, intelligent and helpful. Poison darts they certainly use—to kill rats and monkeys for food; and they can probably be as ferocious in the face of attack as any other race, whether civilized or not.

As for *Booloo*, let us give credit to the man who had to paint the tiger white and to the cameraman who knew his job and did it well.

Hollywood! Stick to fiction and don't pretend that it is fact. Give us adventure and tropic love. We like it. But next time you make a jungle picture, in the sacred name of entertainment, give us Lamour as well.

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The SCREEN CHINAMAN CHANGES

The Achievement of Charlie Chan.

By Richard Carr

WHEN Pearl White died last month the newspaper placards read "Pearl White Dead". But when, a few days later, Warner Oland died, the newspapers announced "Charlie Chan Dead". That is a very great difference indeed, if you think about it. Even Paul Muni wouldn't get a placard like that—it wouldn't be "Scarface Dead" or "Hi Nellie Dead", it would just be "Paul Muni Dead". Nor when Henry Irving died did the newspapers report "Mathias Dead" or "Hamlet Dead", at least I've never heard of such a thing.

Pearl White remained Pearl White, not Elaine, for example, of *The Exploits of Elaine*. She was the central figure in a series of exciting happenings, and the excitement was sufficiently great and sustained to overshadow the beautiful heroine that was Pearl White. To most of us nowadays her name conjures up the great, exciting, formative days of movies; thrills, escapes, chase, capture—the eternal, unchanging ingredients of all popular fiction and movies. Warner Oland appeared in some of the Pearl White serials, but nobody remembers him. In fact, few people care about Warner Oland, but a lot care about Charlie Chan.

Charlie Chan we all got to know very well. We knew him, we knew his wife and we knew his family. His wife hovered in the background of the films, quiet and uninterfering, with none of your Myrna Loy chatter to take the detective, and our minds, off the case. Charlie Chan had hordes of children—I never got to counting them, largely because their existence was never allowed to take attention from the film-story or impede its development—and his eldest son, an American Chinee, educated, formal, dignified, occasionally helped his father in a case. We got to like and wait for the Oriental wisecracks of the sleuth, which we fancied were the fathomless, inscrutable wisdom of the East, condensed for film purposes.

Charlie Chan inspired confidence. When he took a case and refused to believe that the police had arrested the right person, we knew that the suspected man or woman was innocent and that the real culprit would be brought to book. He always had a trick up his sleeve, and went one better than the crooks. When we saw Charlie Chan drop to the floor, shot or stabbed, our anxiety was only momentary: we knew he was fooling them again, playing dead or it was not Charlie at all but a specially made dummy. By such means the crooks would be put off the guard and Chan would soon be catching them out.

If this sounds like laughing at Charlie Chan it isn't meant to. Many screen actors achieve stardom and gain a huge fan following. Few inspire the affection and worship that was given to Charlie Chan, with so few assets to work with. He wasn't handsome, nor an athlete. He did no jaw-socking, no acrobatics: a fat Chinaman is not the boy's idea of a hero by a long shot. Yet he was adored by millions of American and British boys, and had a large adult following too, among those whose hearts are always young and who, for all the sophistication and smart alecing of the last few years, like their films to end right.

Fiction has always had its detectives who have secured a reading public running into millions. They have never made good on the screen. Sherlock Holmes has made fitful screen appearances but failed to create a demand for more. Sexton Blake, whose following must be greater and more long-lived than anybody since Robin Hood, also does poorly in pictures. Even the modern, city-slicker, Perry Mason, who was given a long screen run, established nothing in the way of a regular public. Try to think of any screen detective who has equalled the public of these fiction-heroes—and the answer is that none have—except Charlie Chan.

What a metamorphosis was this! Metamorphosis is the word; change or transformation fail to convey the colossal thing that happened when Charlie Chan climbed out of a 'B' picture into world fame. Charlie Chan—for the benefit of those film society members who never go to the movies—was a Chinaman. A Chinaman could not be a hero, especially to the young. In popular fiction and in the great screen tradition of silent days it was axiomatic that the worst thing you could run up against in this world was a Chinaman. Certain races were long ago marked out by the English as fighting in the wrong way and on the wrong side. Mexicans—though their closeness to the cowboy gave them a chance which they presently took and made good—were not to be trusted; a Red Indian would scalp your poor old crippled grandmother without batting an eye; a Frenchman was either screwy or after your wife and daughter; Italians were the same, though they also went in for rape and were masters at back-stabbing.

But worse than all these, worse even than meeting a cross-eyed man under a ladder, was a Chinaman, who was suave, treacherous, remorseless, kindless, handy with knife and wood-chopper. Chinamen were so bad that they were definitely unpopular, never getting anything like the tolerance and popularity of the gangster gunman. The Chinaman was without any human feelings whatever and he had a build up to death that was not only a defiance of all the canons of international law and outside the pale; it was beyond the reaches of the imagination of any human being, except script writers who, perhaps, don't come in that category.

Chinamen were popular with script writers: of that I am certain. The slow lingering death, with suitable music and settings, meted out to heroes by the heathen Chinee had great filmic advantages. If the gangster gave it to the hero in the back or in the belly the most the script writer could do was fix it so that he was only wounded and came round in hospital with his best girl—with whom he quarrelled throughout the film—sitting moist-eyed on the bed. But the Chinese method gave time for the hero to undo the knots, or bluff and stall, or for a nick-of-time rescue. In fact it was a poor way of killing an enemy for in all my twenty years of screen going I never remember any of the fiendish deaths prepared for screen heroes coming off.

YET all this has gone, from the screen at least, and gone with a completeness that calls for explanation. It is said that the Hays office was responsible: it wanted to placate foreign audiences who, unreasonably I think, resented being shown all the time as stools, crooks and heels. But I don't believe that the Hays office could have done it without ruining the film industry. No censors could. It was Charlie Chan who did it so far as the Chinese were concerned. He made the Chinaman public hero number one. He did more than that. He gave us the first screen detective with the following and popularity of the heroes of fiction, and he gave us a screen characterisation that inspired affection. And that *is* something.

The strength of his achievement was shown when Charlie Chan gave place to Fu Manchu or some such devilish Chinee. Warner Oland made fitful returns to the kind of parts he played in the Pearl White days. But they created no demand for more. No one believed in that kind of Chinaman any more. The silky voice, full of menace, the slant eyes, the pad-pad of the slippers—how could all this be true when we'd seen Charlie Chan?

And I wouldn't mind betting that Charlie is in heaven right now clearing up all the unsolved crimes of history. And a lot of guys who got past Peter at the gate by not telling all, are now busy slugging, poisoning, doping Charlie's mint-julep, and sending him warning notes to lay off, whereas they might just as well start packing their things and move down to the other place right away.

THE LONE PRAIRIE

('*The Plainsman*'—*Paramount.*)

(AFTER ANNOUNCER AND CHORUS OF STAR-SPANGLED BANNER
FADE CHORUS . . .
FADE UP GALLOPING HORSE
FADE AWAY INTO . . .)

One hundred years ago, through the part of Texas that rims the Gulf of Mexico, across a diamond-shaped stretch of country roughly the size of England, a hundred thousand cattle roamed a plain of grass.

Most of them were not sold or herded or watched or shipped anywhere. They were like coyotes and rattlesnakes—they just came with the country.

For thirty years they roamed and multiplied.

They became a pest. They were as wild and tough as the buffalo. You couldn't handle them, like an Eastern farmer, with a stick and a friendly voice. But you could handle them if you were at home on horseback and could use a six-shooter. The Carolinas, fifty years before, really cradled American ranching but the Texas industry matured, developed it and set the characteristic pattern.

So last century gave birth near the Gulf of Mexico to something as logical and necessary as a steamship or a city bank.

I mean . . . the cowboy, the true knight of the nineteenth century.

(PLAY GROFE-GRAND CANYON SUITE, Sunrise—as BACKGROUND)

After the Civil War there were five million cattle in that corner of Texas.

You could buy a cow in Texas for four dollars. A man a thousand miles away, in Wyoming or Iowa, would pay you fifty dollars if you could get it to him. Naturally, a lot of people, in Prescott Webb's words, "took vigorous measures to connect the four-dollar cow with a fifty-dollar market."

The measures they took were no less and no more than the whole skill and industry of ranching. And the symbol and backbone of the cattle kingdom was . . . the cowboy.

Here is a sketch of his life and work, and the songs that come from nothing but that work and the monotony it leaves him to reflect on when he is sad or gay or in trouble.

Like some biblical prophet, these early men of Texas looked at the horizon of grass and owned what they saw . . . a range.

They found a stream and said, This is Mine.

If you had a stream and a vacant range, you were ready for the ranching business. You started to get yourself an Outfit, that is—

The whole crew of cattle, horses, wagons, and cowboys who start their work outdoors on April 15th and end it the first of December . . .

(FADE OUT GRAND CANYON SUITE)

First comes the Chuck Wagon, which carries food and bedding and tents. At the back of it over an open fire, any morning before the sun breaks through, stands the cook, frying bacon, brewing strong coffee. The red sun sifts in, and the cook goes around the tent and calls the men . . .

(PLAY GITTIN' UP HOLLER)

Wake up, Jacob, day's a breakin',
Fryin' pan's on an' the hoe cake's bakin',
Bacon on the pan and coffee in the pot,
Git up now and git it while it's hot.

It's a tempting sound all right, but it happens to be sung at four-thirty in the morning and many a cowboy feels this way about his work:

(PLAY ROLL OUT COWBOYS)

The greener lad he thinks it's play,
He'll peter out on a rainy day,
With his big-bell spurs and his Spanish hoss,
He'll swear that he used to be the Boss.
Then at half-past four
The noisy cook will roar—
Hoop-a-hoop-a-hey, roll out Cowboys.
Slowly you arise with sleepy feelin' eyes.
The sweet dreamy night has passed away.

The cowboy's life is a dreary life,
He's driving through the heat and the cold,
While the rich man's a-sleepin' on his velvet couch
A-dreamin' of his silver and gold.
Then at half-past four
The noisy cook, etc.

If it's the spring, the cattle must be rounded-up for their long trail north. The cowboys may have to round up over an area of anything from ten square miles to four thousand. It may take a day and it most likely takes a week. It's hard and dangerous work. When the calves are got together, the branding starts, to keep the herds distinct. While the branding is going on, a few cowboys will ride vigorously round the mooing, milling cattle making such a song as this:

The cowboy, knight of the nineteenth century, has been glorified out of recognition by fiction and films. His harsh voice has been softened, his prairie songs sweetened by Tin Can Alley.

Here is the script of 'The Lone Prairie', broadcast by Alistair Cooke in his brilliant series 'I Hear America Singing'. Here is the story of the cowboy, his day's work, and some of the songs once sung on the prairie and in the bunk-house.

(PLAY RIDIN' ROUND CATTLE)

Whoopin' up cattle,
I'm sendin' up cattle,
I'm ridin' roun' cattle
With a whoop-ti-diddle-dum-yay-tan-yay
And a whoop-ti-diddle-dum-yay.

When the herds had been separated and branded with the simple sign of the man who owned them—a circle, a cross, a hammer—then plans were made to start the long trek north . . . twelve or fifteen hundred miles across treeless plains with the possible enemies of tornado, windstorm, famine, the certain enemies last century of—buffalo and Indians.

The Outfit is ready. Ahead the Chuck Wagon.

Then the Hoodlum Wagon carrying the water barrels, wood and branding irons.

Then the Remuda—the cow ponies trailing behind the wagon.

Then the "line"—the winding tape of cattle, with cowboys riding at a slow amble at intervals, keeping the line clean and moving, watching, like this cowboy, for some nervous dogie—the yearling steers, or you might call them orphan calves. *It's your misfortune and none of my own*, he sings—

Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along little dogies!
It's your misfortune and none of my own;
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home!

Early in the spring we round up the dogies,
Mark and brand and bob off their tails,
Round up our horses, load up the chuck wagon,
Then throw the dogies up on the trail:
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, etc.

As the days burn their way along, the cowboy has lots of time to think of odd things that happened at the round-up, about for instance a young city man who tried to ride a bronco, called *Zebra Dun* . . .

(PLAY ZEBRA DUN)

When the stranger hit the saddle old Dunny quit the earth
And travel'd right straight up for all that he was worth.
A-pitchin' an' a squealin' an' a-having wall-eyed fits
His hind feet perpendicular, his front ones in the bits.

We could see the tops of mountains under Dunny's every jump
But the stranger he was growed there just like a camel's hump.
The stranger sat upon him and curled his black moustache
Just like a summer boarder a-waitin' for his hash.
There's one thing and a sure thing I've learned since I've been born,
Every educated feller ain't a plumb greenhorn.

And when they next pitch camp or stop to eat, a fiddle and a guitar will waken memories of The Trail to Mexico, the cowboy classic of a love that was not returned . . .

It was in the year of eighty-three
That A. J. Stinson hired me;
He says, "Young man, I want you to go
And follow this herd into Mexico."

Well, it was early in the year
When I started out to drive those steers;
Through sleet and snow 'twas a lonesome go
As the herd rolled on into Mexico.

When I arrived in Mexico
I wanted to see my girl but I could not go;
So I wrote a letter to my dear
But not a word for years did I hear.

Well, I started back to my once loved home,
Inquired for the girl I had called my own;
They said she had married a richer life,
Therefore, wild cowboy, seek another wife.

At the end of one trail, another trail is starting. A cowboy in Cheyenne, Wyoming, sings a farewell to the town as he rides his horse, Old Paint, up to Montana . . .

My foot is in the stirrup, my pony won't stan'
I'm a leavin' Cheyenne, I'm off for Montan'.
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm a-leaving Cheyenne.

Old Paint's a good pony, he paces when he can,
Good morning, young lady, my hosses won't stan'.
Oh, hitch up your hosses and feed 'em some hay,
My wagon is loaded and rolling away.

I'm a-riding Old Paint, I am a leading old Dan,
I'm goin' to Montan' for to throw the hoolihan.
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm a-leavin Cheyenne.

The night comes on and the wagons are at a standstill. The tents are pitched and the dinner's over. They sit around the fire behind the Chuck Wagon and think of the luxuries they can have when the herd is delivered. Such as this song about Rye Whisky, all the more tearful when you realise not many ranchers allow their men liquor away from the ranch . . .

It's a beef-steak when I'm hungry,
Rye whisky when I'm dry,
A greenback when I'm hard up,
And heaven when I die.
Oh, whisky, rye whisky, whisky, I cry.
If a tree don't fall over me,
I'll live till I die.

Her parents, don't like me,
They say I'm too poor.
Say I'm unfit
To wed their daughter.
Her parents don't like me,
My money's my own.
And them that don't like me
Can leave me alone.
Oh, whisky, rye whisky, etc.

Cowboys had to make their own pleasure. And a tune to them was a precious stone to re-cut and turn over in your hand. Here's one slightly changed by this cowboy, set to words that lead you on to a rhyme that never comes.

It's a nonsense song containing possibly the worst similes in the language. And it's called, the Horse Named Bill . . .

Oh, I had a horse and his name was Bill,
And when he ran he couldn't stand still.
And also—
I ran with him.

He ran so fast he could not stop,
He ran into a barber shop,
And fell exhaustionised—with his eyeteeth-
In the barber's left shoulder.

[continued on page 215]

Managing Director :
DONALD TAYLOR

★

Producers of Quality Shorts

★

Distributed by Technique Distributors

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At the Venice Exhibition

Strand Films : FIVE FACES, WATCH AND WARD IN THE AIR, MONKEY INTO MAN

T.I.D.A. Films (Produced by Strand): THE BRITISH NAVY, OF ALL THE GAY PLACES

At the Malvern Festival

At the Malvern Picture House Pageant of British Films, all the shorts were Strand Films
ZOO BABIES, MITES AND MONSTERS, ZOO AND YOU, WATCH AND WARD IN THE AIR, LONDON WAKES UP

At the British Association

Special show of MONKEY INTO MAN, MITES AND MONSTERS

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Continuing 'The Lone Prairie'

I had a gal and her name was Daisy,
And when she sang the cat went crazy
With diliriums—St. Vituses—
And all kinds—
Of cataleptics.

I'm going out in the woods next year
And shoot for beer—and not for deer—
I am—I ain't—
I'm a great
Sharshootress.

At shooting birds I am a beant.
There is no bird I cannot shoot
In the eye, in the ear, in the teeth,
In the fin(g)ers.

Oh, I went up in a balloon so big,
The people on the earth they looked like a pig,
Like a mice—like a katydid—like flieses—
And like fleasens.

The balloon turned up with its bottom side higher,
It fell on the wife of a country squire,
She made a noise like a dog hound, like a steam whistle,
And also—
Like dynamite.

Oh, what could you do in a case like that?
Oh, what could you do but stamp on your hat,
And your toothbrush—and everything—
That's helpless.

As the light suddenly fails and the fire dies, the oldest singer of the outfit will be called on to sing a song that is practically the cowboy's night time prayer. He may like his work, he may never begrudge the perils of a round-up, the weariness of twenty hours in a hard saddle; but when he dies, like this cowboy, he'd rather be buried anywhere than on the lone prairie . . .

"Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie,
Where the wild kiyotes will howl o'er me;
Where the rattlesnakes hiss and the wind howls free,
Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie."

"Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie,"
These words came slowly and mournfully,
From the pallid lips of a youth who lay
On his cold damp bed at the close of day.

They heeded not his dying prayer,
They buried him there on the lone prairie,
In a little box just six by three,
His bones now rot on the lone prairie.

And the cowboys now as they roam the plain
(For they have marked the spot where his bones have lain)
Fling a handful of roses over his grave,
With a prayer to him who his soul will save.

Cowboy and Horse holding a lassoed cow (*Keystone*)

The score or more men go off to their tents. The cook has been abed an hour or two. For a small herd, a single cowboy goes on duty to watch and keep them quiet through the night. If one cow gets nervous, two will get frightened. And two frightened cattle, starting at a coyote's cry, might start a stampede. And a stampede means each cow of several hundred will lose from four to seven pounds in weight. Since cattle are fattened for profit, it would mean when selling time came, a loss of several thousand dollars to the rancher.

So the herding songs are pleasant lullabies, but they are also a form of social insurance . . .

Oh, go slow, dogies,
Quit rovin' around,
You have wandered and tramped all over the ground;
Oh, graze along, dogies, and feel kind of slow,
And don't for ever be on the go.
Hi-hoo, hi-hoo-oo-oo-oo.

Oh, say, little dogies,
When you're gonna lay down?
And quit this for ever a-siftin' around?
My legs are weary
And my seat is sore,
Oh, lay down, dogies, like you've laid down before,
Lay down, little dogies, lay down.
Hi-hoo, hi-hoo-oo-oo-oo.

THIS was the cowboy. Who beat out trails over tall grass and snow for two thousand miles. Trails south to Mexico. Trails north to Sedalia and Abilene and Chaycnne.

He tended meat for the north, at first tough meat from longhorns, then as the kingdom prospered delicate rich meat from Herefords and Durhams.

For twenty years after the Civil War, the business grew.

Till the whole world rushed to be in on a good thing.

There came "generations from the four corners of the earth gathered by boom magic."

Men who had never seen the range played a rising market.

By 1880, those thousands of square miles were overstocked and over-sold. Thirty years before, a cow could wander a day for its food. In the end there were less than four acres for every cow to browse on. A single drought and for ten thousand cattle rounded up on one range, fifteen thousand lay dead and shaggy.

The waves of swaying grass the Texans saw were bitten down to desert. 1885 came the crash and the crumbling of the glory that was the cowboy.

One by one the symbols of the range have vanished . . . the buffalo, the prairie-dog, the longhorn. Barbed-wire traced out a pattern of decay, strung off ranges into farms.

(PLAY GRAND CANYON SUITE —PAINTED DESERT marked band for BACKGROUND . . .)

The Cowboy is the last to linger. With his bony frame, his self-sufficiency, his gentleness, his knotted scarf, "his loose arms slightly raised and swinging", as he rides away from our time into the records of the American Dream . . .

(FADE UP PAINTED DESERT . . .
FADE AWAY . . .

FADE UP RIDIN' ROUND CATTLE
LIFT PAINTED DESERT for harmonic background

FADE AWAY RIDIN' ROUND CATTLE
FADE UP PAINTED DESERT.)

Job to be Done.

Under the shade of the best tree in Kansas four men tell of their search for work . . . from Pare Lorentz's radio play

(With acknowledgments to the B.B.C. and to the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation of America).

[*The March of Time.*]

WE watched the pictures of *The Plow that Broke the Plains*. We listened to the sound track of *The River*. Lorentz's new work—a Symphony of Reality—a Factual Drama of the American Industrial Scene, based on official reports and hundreds of case-histories collected by government investigators (*cf. The Living Newspaper*)—is wholly sound track. *Job to be Done* is the basis script of Pare Lorentz's next film, written for the radio, produced first in New York by William Robson, director of Columbia Workshop, produced again at the B.B.C. by Laurence Gilliam with Alistair Cooke advising. Its theme is unemployment. Long lists of place names and their products set the scene.

Narrator: Buffalo and Syracuse.

Statistician: Flour and feed, bread and meat; tin cans and roller bearings, wax candles and soda ash; mincemeat and typewriters, washing machines and light bulbs.

Narrator: Cleveland and Youngstown.

Statistician: Nuts and bolts and printing presses; Diesel engines and multigraph machines; electric batteries and steel forgings.

Narrator: Akron and Toledo.

Statistician: Airplane motors and rubber tyres; fishing tackle and dirigibles; electric batteries and cash registers; medical instruments and fire engines; beer bottles and spark plugs; steel hooks and microphones; spray guns and paper bags.

Voice: This is Industrial America—
The straight line in an automobile works symbolises high pressure industry.

Guide: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the straight line. In two minutes before your very eyes, you will see thirty thousand different pieces of material assembled into one machine.

Voice: Number 7791—
Number 7792—
Number 7793—
Number 7794—
Number 7795—
Number 7796—
Number 7797—
(*Orchestra, time clock and numbers continue background*)

Guide: Two weeks ago these parts were still in the mines of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the oil fields of Texas and Oklahoma, and the copper vats of Montana, the iron mountains of Minnesota. They have come from the strip mills of Ohio, from the textile mills of the South; tested and checked, processed and perfected in plants as intricate as this.

Along these two steel tracks—half a mile long—you will see steel, iron mountains of Minnesota. They have come from brass, tin, lead, zinc, aluminium, chromium and nickel. You will see rubber, mica, glass, cotton, mohair, all fit into place, magically assembled into one tested perfect piece of machinery, the American automobile. Two days ago these parts were moving through a hundred factories. On a hundred straight lines they received the skill of thousands of men and women in order that they might reach this assembly plant in a state of perfection. You will see a new car drive off the line every half a minute.

Here through the vigilance and skill of workers, inspectors, managers and scientists, men and machines create a perfect instrument.

Here is a saga of human integrity, planning and co-ordination—the glory of industrial America. Here is the straight line!

A phone dialogue between Sales Manager and Time Study Manager leads to a lay-off symbolised by a chorus. The theme becomes personal. Worker No. 7790 applies for relief. But there's work in the West.

7790*:* 7790 headed west . . . in a '36 sedan and 85 bucks in his pocket.

Name, age, occupation.

I remember when we went down to the court-house.

You could see the pines stretching clear across to Virginia then.

You could kick a pheasant out of a laurel bush and go hook a bass at the head of the riffles, and work a corn patch all in one day.

I remember when we went down to the court-house. They had the old boys in the fife corps march with us.

And I remember how Judge Adams got red in the face and waved his arms.

Going to France to save the women and children.

They kept kicking Ben Davis up and getting him on the steps; dead drunk he was.

I remember the kids didn't go to school; they stood on the freight cars and hollered when the train pulled out . . .

It was hot in Chillicothe.

Narrator: 7790 riding with a million men on wheels.

Statistician: The cotton pickers riding on route 90 out of New Orleans for Houston; through to San Anton; North to Oklahoma and Arizona and the new cotton fields.

7790*:* When we came we used to sit on the court-house steps and watch for the new cars going through town . . .

They said it was the war . . . but they cut down the trees while we were away and put up electric light poles on Main Street.

They said times were different: the chemical plant killed the bass clear down past Black's Ford and you'd walk ten miles to find a clear stream.

They put a French '75 in the court-house square and we used to sit all day Sunday talking and looking at the new cars.

Narrator: 7790 riding on the highway of the unemployed.

Statistician: The fruit tramps riding on the Delta road over from Jacksonville across the continent clear to California. Up route 99 for lemons and oranges, prunes and peaches. Up past Fresno and Washington and Oregon for apples.

(*Orchestra:* 1920 *jazz*)

The man said he'd give us all a hundred dollars and our railroad fare.

He said they needed strongboys in the north.

They gave us ten dollars a day in Akron.

We bought silk shirts and got drunk every night.

We stayed out all night and slept at the machines and the foremen used to throw wrenches at us. It was crazy then. You could spend all night at the amusement park and buy silk shirts.

In the body plants you could get twenty dollars if you worked hard.

We were 22 then.

I remember the tough inspector in Detroit. He caught me sitting down and chased me clear out of the plant, and they had my check waiting at the cage as I went by.

Narrator: 7790 riding West on 40—west of the flat corn belts of Indiana and Illinois.

Statistician: The pickers riding west *en route* 80 for lettuce, peas, onions and spinach . . . up 87 to Denver and Sheridan; along the side of the Rockies to Billings and Great Falls for sugar beets.

(*Orchestra: Black Bottom*)

I remember in '27 when the production department said we couldn't weld zinc, and we got the gas tank weld going in six weeks.

They gave us a bonus then.

(*Orchestra: overlap industrial theme*)

I remember in '29 when we built up 15,000 units a day and then they put us on short units, and the married men only got four days a week. Then they got the 20 ton press in Plant No. 10, and got the kids to punch out tops and fenders; kids pushing buttons and punching out body tops and fenders.

Narrator: 7790 heading West, west across the Mississippi.

Statistician: The wheat hands heading west on route 10 out of Minneapolis—west across the Northern table-top to Fargo and Grand Forks; Valley City and Bismarck; over the divide from Miles City to Missoula and Spokane.

Name, age and occupation . . .

They'll sit around the union hall, and the married men will get the first relief cards. They'll go to meetings, and the old men will get the first short time.

They'll talk politics and cuss and wait for the food cards—but there's country in the West I've never seen.

They said the youngsters get all the jobs—but the youngsters never carried duck boards out of Brest . . . the mud up to your knees. They said the bums go West—but they're building dams in the desert, they're cuttin' down mountains in the West.

(*continued on page* 219)

MERTON PARK STUDIOS

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(*Sound: automobile*)

Narrator: Riding with a million men on wheels.

In Kansas, there's a gas station with an operator who might be Chick Sale. From Alabama, from Texas, from Massachusetts, come men in search of work. The gas station has a tree. "Best shade in Kansas". And in the shadow of the tree the four men tell their personal stories.

Filling Station Operator: Ho hum, yes-sir, best shade in Kansas.

7790: Feels good to me, after that hot road.

F.S.O.: You said you're from the East, eh?

7790: Yeah.

F.S.O.: How is it back there?

7790: Sort of quiet.

* * *

F.S.O.: I never been East, but I was telling mamma the other day. Man sit right here on this porch and meet people from all over.

F.S.O.: Sit down, sit down; like I told this feller—best shade in Kansas.

Texas: Feels good to me. Thanks for the loan of the crowbar.

7790: That's all right.

(*Sound: car pulls in*)

F.S.O.: My, my, look at that fellow boil. (*Fade.*) Mamma, bring that water can out; got a fellow on fire here.

Alabama: (*Fade in.*) I thought it got hot in Alabama, but this Kansas, now it's really hot.

F.S.O.: Brother, this is mid-winter to what it was in '36. Now that's when it was hot. I was sittin' right here on this porch, when old man Jones—got 2 section land west over there—comes running in to call the Abiline fire department—his wheat field just naturally blew up and caught fire, so hot. Gospel truth. Spontaneous combustion, or something, they said.

7790: I'm going West.

Texas: I'm aimin' for Ioway.

Alabama: Well, I'm headin' East. Thought I'd find some company. My old grandmother always said poor people ought to travel together.

Mass: I'm from the East. I'll tell you about it. My partner and me set the first machinery in the biggest textile mill on the coast. There's no two better mill mechanics in Massachusetts we used to say.

(*Harmonium sneak*).

Mass: And when they shut the mills down in '31 we watched them sitting there; like blind, grey men, with their broken windows, and the fogs drifting in from the Vineyard. We sat there and watched them.

(*Pause*)

Then we took summer people for boat rides and fished for bait and waited.

We helped them tear out the machinery and we watched them take down the brick.

The mills are moving South, they said, but we're New England men.

So we bought a trailer, and we went over to the lakes.

They'll need mill men in the new factories, we said.

It was cold in Michigan. My partner had a dog. But we gave him to a fellow and got a cat. The cat could find his own food.

They didn't need mechanics, they said.

Then we sold the trailer.

My partner took his share and went home. Goin' on relief he figured, but I'm headin' South where the mills are.

If there's cotton mills they'll need machinists, I told him.

There's work in the South.

Alabama: Brother, there's work in the South.

(*Music sneak negro singers*)

There's work for eight million people plantin' cotton, choppin' cotton, pickin' cotton; following the sun in the hot fields.

There's work in the new cotton mills; work enough at eight dollars a week and the lint choking you and the kids and the storeman leaving you behind every Saturday.

* * *

Texas: They took me West when I was six years old. My father moved me from Missouri.

(*Orchestra: sneak—*

Goodbye to Texas)

They said my lungs were bad; that the river was bad for my lungs.

You could see the tan grass waving for a fifty miles out there then.

Nights I used to cry when the Rock Island whistled across the plains; and the coyotes answered.

I used to cry and once I tried to run away. Then they gave me a pony and a heifer of my own, and I never wanted to go back.

When I was 21 my father gave me a section of land, and my brother and I ran three sections in '17.

Then we went to war, and they ploughed up the ranch. They told my father it was patriotic so they ploughed it all while we were away.

They brought the tractors and the combines—fellows used to come clear from Chicago and plant a crop and go away.

Suitcase farmers we called them. They used to plough a thousand acres a week before the dust came. We stuck it six years.

We sat six years and watched the dust. We watched the dust drift over the windows, and it took all fall to push the dust off the fields—so you could raise another crop of dust the next spring.

So we hit the highway in '36.

I'll tell you about the West.

There's work picking cotton at twenty cents an hour, living alongside the road and eating beans and meat the butcher throws away.

There's work in cuttin' grapes, for a cent a tray, money for gas enough to get you to the next camp.

There's work shakin' trees at a dollar a day; and tyres and oil to buy when you move on. And there's the nights in camp, with the children cryin' and the women staring at you so a man ca'nt stand it.

I said I'd drown mine, before I'd raise kids that way, so I'm headin' for Ioway.

My wife's following the crops with my brother, but I'm leavin' the kids with kin in Ioway, so they'll know what a home's like.

Maybe I'll go back.

(*Orchestra: Industrial theme*)

7790: They had to let the dynamiters down the side of the canyon on ropes at Boulder Dam. They blew up a mountain and made a lake in a desert and built the highest dam in the world.

Alabama: But you can't eat dams.

7790: They're changing the course of the second biggest river in the country at Grand Coulee.

Mass: But they can't figure out how to feed eleven millions of us.

7790: They hit quicksand up there, so they stuck brine pipes in and froze 'er, and then dug it out.

Texas: But the big boys have the machines; there's nothing but relief for the little men.

(*Cast and chorus sneak battle hymn of Republic*)

7790: There's men and machines and there's room. There'll be water enough for a hundred thousand farms, up there, they say.

Mass: But the big boys have the money.

7790: There's room enough for thirty million people—man, they're building the biggest piece of machinery in the world.

Alabama: But what'll you do when they finish?

7790: There's room for plenty more. I'm headin' West. If they can make the desert green, maybe they'll build a green city. Maybe there'll be farms for the little boys. But they're moving mountains and I'm headin' West where there's men and machines and room—where there's sun and land and room for a man to move. Where there's a man-sized job. . . .

(*Orchestra and Chorus up to colossal tag*)

LORENTZ lives in a big country. His themes are big. And he is not afraid to handle them big. It was said of *The River* that it humanised nothing. *Job to be Done* humanises a lot. The industrial stuff of the opening can be forgotten. It has been done before and, anyways, is a trick. But the personal stories of the four men fetched up from four parts of the country beneath the best shade in Kansas is new. It shows us Lorentz as a writer of dialogue. And that dialogue is good. It suggests that maybe Lorentz's real field will be that of radio—will be sound and not picture. The visuals of *The Plow* and *The River* were good visuals but they were cameramen's visuals. It was the sound track of *The River*—the narration—that gripped and charmed for all its poetry. In *Job to be Done* it's the speech, the personal intimate stories, that make this one of the best bits of radio of the summer. Gilliam's production was as good as could be done in England. All the Americans and Canadians in London must have been at the B.B.C. that night. And I defy you to remember who was the one Englishman in the cast and that's not counting Mr. Cooke.

TOUGH GUYS, BARNARDO'S and BLANCMANGE

Basil Wright reviews 'Little Tough Guy', 'The Boy from Barnardo's' and 'Kidnapped'.

AFTER the gangsters and the crazy comedies, the costume whimsies and the historical dramas, one may well imagine the Olympians of Beverley Hills scratching their highly polished craniums in the search for a new snack for their hydra-headed pet, the Public. And here it is, in the form of the male adolescent, suitable lay figure for adventure, and a magnificent coathanger for the samite robes of the Hays organisation. If you *want* to think of sex, say the producers, do so, do so—but don't imagine *we* are going to give you any opportunities. Heil, therefore, Bartholomew! Viva, Rooney! And, after all, it's not a bad thing to have to build your stories round such figures; there are possibilities galore: *Coral Island*, *The Children of the New Forest*, *The Would-be-goods*, *A High Wind in Jamaica*, and, of course, *Kidnapped*—but more of that anon. But it isn't as simple as all that, for there is a rival—a little dishevelled by now—in the shape of the Film With a Certain Amount But Not Too Much Social Content. I speak not of Muni, for his films are far above our present considerations; but with some gall I have to draw your attention to *Little Tough Guy*, featuring all the *Dead End* kids (except Bobby Jordan, who was recently graduated into comedy in *A Slight Case of Murder*).

"Ces nymphes, je veux les perpetuer," sighed apparently the spirit of Universal Pics., Inc., and with a sublime disregard of good sense attempted to do so by a senseless re-hash of the *Dead End* mise en scène.

We have the squalid streets and the squalid rooms, the street boy turning gangster; and the final horrid débâcle converted with nauseous ingenuity into a happy ending. We have everything, in fact, except the one thing that made *Dead End* a goodish film—a basis of reality. *Dead End*, with all its faults, placed before us the outlines of a real and very pressing social problem; its story related to our everyday observation, and its characters were real because their actions were to be explained by environment rather than circumstance. *Little Tough Guy* concentrates only on circumstance, and falls into the same error as Fritz Lang, who, after a genuine success in *Fury*, spoiled everything by a repeat effort (*You Only Live Once*), in which the dice were so ponderously loaded against his hero and heroine that after reel two we were comfortably aware that we needn't bother to believe in them. Here the Boy (Billy Halop, whose visage takes on a greater resemblance to Humphrey Bogart every time a lens opens on it) is assailed by such a frenzy of pointless disasters as even Jude the Obscure might jib at, and his facile descent into Hell is only slightly less dreary and uninteresting than his rocket-like resurrection into a paradise of brass bands and uniforms at a reformatory prize giving. Halop can act, but that is only half a consolation in a film which slowly drags along the ball and chain of an unimaginative and altogether silly feuilleton story.

"Little Tough Guy" is a Universal film directed by Harold Young. "The Boy from Barnardo's" is an M.G.M. film directed by Sam Wood. "Kidnapped" was made by Twentieth Century-Fox, and directed by Alfred Werker. "The Last Night" was produced by Moscow Film Studios and directed by Yu. Raizman.

The Boy from Barnardo's is a very different matter. For one thing, it contains Mickey Rooney, whom I am inclined to regard as being as good an actor as Spencer Tracy, and who, as the Irish Barnardo boy, masters even the good old self-sacrifice for the Pal, with a quite amazing competence. Secondly, it has all the best production values of M.G.M.; settings, camerawork, cast and direction are excellent. Thirdly, and most importantly, its makers have decided on a *genre* and have stuck to it. It is a *genre* I happen to like very much, so maybe my critical faculties have been slightly numbed, but, to all those who read with enjoyment the works of Talbot Baines Reed, especially *The Fifth Form at St. Dominics* and *My Friend Smith*, I am certain this film will make a direct appeal. Despite some acutely embarrassing lines ("I'd prefer to steer a straight course, Sir . . . "), the film has a real simplicity, and a certain sincerity of purpose. The entire length of the plot is visible a few minutes after it begins, and, like the quiet satisfaction of an oft-repeated pleasure, folds us at once beneath its nostalgic wings. And some of the characters, especially Charles Coburn and Herbert Mundin, have an all too rare Dickensian quality.

However, the most important thing to note about the film is that it is a boost, well-deserved we must all agree, and very accurately rendered, of a famous British organisation. It ought indeed to send up the Barnardo donations by fifty per cent. Why then, and I wish someone could give a convincing answer to this question, was it not made by a British film company? By what somnolent thought-process does our industry arrive at its dreary subject-matter when Hollywood steals from it, at least twice a year, the really exciting and extremely box-office subjects that have been sitting in the waiting room ever since Quota raised its Medusa head? And echo answers, "Vy?"

By the way, Master Freddie Bartholomew plays opposite Mickey Rooney in *The Boy from Barnardo's*. He is getting quite a big boy now, his voice is beginning to break, and there are signs, here and there, that he is beginning to master the rudiments of acting. I mention him because he plays David Balfour to Warner Baxter's Alan Breck Stuart in a film called *Kidnapped*. I read a book of the same name about ten times before I was twelve years old, and I have always retained a great affection for it, as well as a burning memory of most of its major incidents. Lest, therefore, I might be too cantankerous an old fogey to appreciate its present transmogrification, I sought a second opinion in the shape of a downright-thinking and by no means unintelligent Scot. I was glad that his opinion agreed with mine. He found the famous stairway episode admirable, he was struck almost speechless and certainly unprintable by the simpering blancmange of the love interest, and regretted, with extraordinary restraint, what he called "the insult to the men of the clans, who surged around like a crowd of extras (so they were), acclaiming now one silly rallying cry, now its direct negative, or falling into a sudden hush, all with a most un-Scottish unanimity and simpleness of mind".

For my part, in spite of the good opening, I found the whole thing intolerable. Synthetic sets, conventional sentimentality, no shipwreck, no flight across the heather, and, crowning it all, Warner Baxter as Alan Breck. Why not C. Aubrey Smith? Why not George Arliss?

THE Last Night is a grimly dramatic picture about the eve of the October Revolution in Russia. It follows the fortunes of an ordinary family through the street fighting and the muddled terrors of that night, and concentrates very largely on the personal tragedies, and the extraordinary *bouleversements* which crowd on each other from moment to moment. Photographed in a low-keyed and slightly sinister style, it achieves, in spite of certain longueurs, an intimate and slightly sentimental study of persons involved in a crisis of the first magnitude. The wider results of this crisis—the realisation of the new freedom to be so hardly won—are reserved for the final sequence. The acting is first class.

BOXING TAYLORS and MILK BAR COWBOYS

Marion Fraser reviews 'The Crowd Roars', 'Gold Is Where You Find It' and 'The Texans'.

IN *The Crowd Roars* Robert Taylor plays in a man's picture for a change. This is an efficiently acted, well polished film with some good fight scenes, which, I think, will appeal to boxing fans. Taylor is the pugilist and, although I am no judge, he appears to do a good job of it. There is a love interest, of course, and Maureen O'Sullivan is it, but this is nicely balanced to the main theme. The story is about a boxer who does not like the racketeering that goes with boxing but is forced to stick with it because he knows nothing else. There is a bit of crookery and a bit of gangsterism, but these are not overstressed. The tail of the plot hangs on the good old gags: the rescue of the girl and the big fight won when the news comes through.

The Crowd Roars might have had a better and more original plot, but I doubt if many films have been made more neatly or efficiently. Moreover it sets Taylor in his place as a capable actor, star value and all that aside. There are plenty of scenes where Taylor displays his fine physique and handsome profile, so there is little chance that the picture will lose on feminine appeal. Trust Hollywood. However, they have the restraint to keep the love story in the background and Taylor is allowed a chance to do some real acting outside love scenes.

The finish of the big fight and of the film is sufficiently exciting but not exciting enough to justify the title. Better sound-cutting might have done the trick.

THOUSANDS of head of cattle driving across the Rio Grande, milling through dust storms, swimming across rivers, stampeding along a railway track—those are the spectacles in *The Texans*, a Paramount job that has all the elements of a good Western. There are space and air and fine scenery; there are Indians and cowboys and police patrols; there is a beautiful heroine and a brave hero. With all those it is a film well above the average summer-time fare, but if you are thinking of *The Plainsman* I am afraid you will be disappointed.

It is certainly not as fine a film as *The Plainsman*. The Western, as we know it after a long acquaintanceship, has, or should have, a real villain one can hiss in good earnest. The hero must be dashing and spectacular as well as brave. The heroine should be sweet and timid as well as beautiful. The Indians should be bloodthirsty and murderous; the cowboys tough and crude.

According to these long-established traditions *The Texans* is a milk-and-water affair and the excuse that it is historical does not wash. No slice of American history worth its salt should present us with Indians that look more fitted for an acrobatic act in a circus than for good honest scalping forays. Joan Bennett, the heroine, is much too capable of looking after herself, and Randolph Scott, the hero, much too much of a worm, even though he does turn eventually. Another thing, when cowboys sing, one does not expect them to sing so obviously to the microphone.

This leaves only the cattle uncriticised. Actually the cattle are pretty good, and the cameramen who shot them on the move, the real heroes of this film.

CLAUDE RAINS has been in better pictures than *Gold is Where You Find It*. The title sounds deeply moral, but there is no need for trepidation. There really is gold-mining and there are some beautiful shots of high-pressure hoses busy washing away hill-sides. The story tries to prove that it is a far better thing to grow fruit than to mine for gold. The second meaning of gold applies to Californian fruit which we see in Technicolor—and very pretty the peaches look too. All they forget is to show the labels on the tins.

I don't know how they process Technicolor, but the introductory shots of gold mining are suffused wtih a golden hue. It is an interesting trick and might be used intelligently to great purpose. Returning to the film—it is always a great pleasure to watch Claude Rains at work. He does a fine job of acting in a part that allows him a good deal of scope. He almost proves that agriculture is the thing.

"The Crowd Roars" is an M.G.M. picture, directed by Richard Thorpe. "Gold is Where You Find It" is a Warner picture, Director: Michael Curtiz, and "The Texans" comes from Paramount with James Hogan directing.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by
H. E. BLYTH

Boy Meets Girl

(Lloyd Bacon—Warner Brothers).
James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Marie Wilson, Ralph Bellamy.

The famous Spewack comedy that provided Broadway with some of its liveliest laughs and critics with their quickest form of plot analysis has finally worked its dizzy way to the screen. One of the most fortunate experiences to be had this summer is to be sitting there when the fun starts. Pat O'Brien and James Cagney are the screenwriters now, two zanies who concoct weird plots and weirder ways of working them out, who adopt an unborn baby, and clown themselves out of one ferocious moment into another. Marie Wilson, the starry-eyed, is Susie the studio waitress, and her gentle naïveté is perfect counterpoint for the screaming sarcasm of the screenplay. No more vicious picture of picture-making has ever been painted, and it is to Warner Brothers' credit that no stone of satire was left unturned in this screen version. It is also to their credit, and to the eternal ambidexterity of the Spewack pen that *Boy Meets Girl* is as good a picture as it was a play. No element of cinematic production is left with a shred of dignity. That is a lusty portent in these days of blame-laying, and no shrewder self-inventory has been evident in a long time. Everything is fast and funny—from the script to the edited print, from the smallest bit to the principal roles, from the sound effects to the direction. A few of those beautifully bawdy lines have been placed on Mr. Hays' shelf, but their lack is made up for with resourceful gag invention. *Oh boy.*

—*The Stage*

The Rage of Paris

(Henry Koster—Universal).
Danielle Darrieux, Douglas Fairbanks, jun., Mischa Auer.

Danielle Darrieux's coming-out party, in *The Rage of Paris* and Universal, was one long bath of cuteness which we are willing to condone only if the producers promise to sin no more. Being an expert comedienne, the French actress was able to get by with it, but if they don't watch their step they'll be converting a talented and lovely young star into a grown-up Shirley Temple. Fortunately, we had the memories of the French *Mayerling* and *Club de Femmes* to serve as palliatives; we knew that Miss Darrieux could act as well as purse her lips and rub a trim little dernière after a window sash had fallen upon it. It was quite obvious all the way through that Universal was anxious to exhibit its new leading lady only in light comedy poses. It's gay enough and we're too fond of Miss Darrieux to say we minded terribly, but, now that the letter of introduction has been posted, Universal has some real work to do.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

W. F. N. Selection

The Last Night	* *
Little Tough Guy	*
Gold Is Where You Find It	*
Fast Company	*

Other Films Covered in this Issue

Boy Meets Girl (*stars reserved*)
The Texans
The Rage of Paris
Shopworn Angel
Having Wonderful Time
Algiers
The Sheik
The Boy From Barnardo's
Liszt Rhapsody

Fast Company

(Edward Buzzell—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).
Melvyn Douglas, Florence Rice, Claire Dodd.

Fast Company concerns crooks who steal rare books, fake first editions, and scrap over these pieces of printed paper with as much bitterness as they would over banknotes. Melvyn Douglas, special investigator married to secretary Florence Rice, sets out to discover who stole what and who killed whom. Inevitably, any husband-and-wife comedy-mystery nowadays must be compared with *The Thin Man*, and this one doesn't suffer greatly by comparison. The dialogue crackles like a sub-machine gun, and the plot has as many twists as the trail of a crook in flight. Besides which, Melvyn Douglas and Florence Rice demonstrate long-distance kissing to perfection. If you want to learn how to kiss your wife when you're ten yards apart, go along and see how it is done.

—Moore Raymond, *Sunday Dispatch*

Fast Company gives Melvyn Douglas another "Powell part"—a murder mystery to be solved by a cheery married couple. You know the sort of thing. It has made good stock for several amusing confections recently but this particular pie contains a happy supply of garnishing and spice while its crust has a shine and design that help to make the whole thing most appetising. Melvyn Douglas could not be bettered in the role, a rare-book dealer up against a racket, and Florence Rice is extremely attractive as his playful wife-secretary. Some of their dialogue is really funny. Claire Dodd is worth watching too.

—F.S., *The Sunday Express*

Shopworn Angel

(H. C. Potter—Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer).
Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Walter Pidgeon.

Shopworn Angel is an inexcusable morass about a Texas hayseed who falls into ideal love with a Broadway star while on his way to win the war in 1917. The lady's fancy man agrees that the lady should marry the boy just to crown his happiness and on condition that he doesn't miss the troop-train immediately after the ceremony. So the star goes on singing, and the fancy man goes on gazing at her until a letter arrives from France containing an identification disc. All this is acted for ten times more than it is worth by Walter Pidgeon, Margaret Sullavan, and James Stewart—ascending in that order, and the first is pretty high. Stewart's performance as the hayseed is in the same class with the best things Gary Cooper has done; he is expert at batting an eyelid. I confess to shameful and complete enjoyment of every false sentiment in this film; it is marvellously well done and well directed, and you can hear the sobbing, when there is not too much traffic about, in the street outside.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

The notion of the reform of a corrupt civilization by the noble savage is certainly universal and a great deal older than Rousseau, but the particular form that it takes in this film is intensely American. For the savage is an extreme example of a characteristic American hero, a cowboy enlisted for the wars, bewildered in New York, unable to understand its jokes, and with an inarticulate virtue which even the most dissolute New Yorker seems anxious to protect. This charming character, whom Mr. James Stewart certainly makes irresistible, has an immediate and positively magical effect on a lazy, selfish, and shallowly

sophisticated actress (Miss Margaret Sullavan). He teaches her to rise early in the morning, enjoy the country, and perceive the advantages of marriage, and for this she is so grateful that, although she loves another man, she marries him when he is on the point of sailing for the front. The whole theme is, of course, preposterously sentimental, but Mr. Stewart contrives to make one suspend one's disbelief in such savages, and the whole story is developed with tact and skilful direction.

—*The Times*

Critical Summary.

The young American of the Middle West has always had the power to charm the jaded European, for in this older civilization of ours manners seems to have come dangerously near to suppressing spontaneity, and the simplicity that may be regarded as the twin sister of spontaneity is a relationship foreign to those outside the American continent. And because of this Mr. James Stewart's Middle West farmer, though he is dressed in the khaki uniform of the patriot, commands our feelings and so stimulates our imagination that we almost regret the passing of an age that was simple though primitive. Such is the force of Mr. Stewart's sincerity that Miss Margaret Sullavan's disillusioned woman of the world suggests a European pedigree.

Little Tough Guy

(Harold Young—Universal).
Billy Halop and the "Dead End Kids", Jackie Searl.

The film is well able to expose social evils and injustices, and the method by which the American producer generally launches his attack suggests that every American is at heart something of a sociologist. It is difficult at times to say precisely what the nature of this indictment is for no one particular problem or evil receives the undivided attention of the director. Here the first scene brings in the main protagonist. He is the son of a father who has accidentally killed a man during a strike. He is condemned to death, and his only chance of escape is a second trial. The family he leaves behind—his wife, son and daughter—receive no help from their neighbours and indeed are forced to leave the district for another and even more squalid one. Their departure, however, as stated in the film, suggests a life of deprivation and extreme hardship in their endeavour both to live and yet to find sufficient money for their father's second trial. But it is no more than a suggestion. As soon as they are in their new slum tenement it becomes apparent that the film is not going to devote itself to a particular study of one family but to a general description of the surroundings and behaviour of those who live in them. The half dozen young hooligans, led naturally by Johnny Boylan and "Pig", dominate the scene, and the attention of the spectator is immediately taken away from the main issue and riveted on another and smaller problem—the effect of the gang on the young son. And true to the familiar formula the newcomer proves to be the toughest of the lot. But it is a toughness that is terribly impressive, for it is a façade that hides and protects a mind overwhelmed by the horror of the world's injustice. In a single scene—when the boy and another are trapped in a shop by the police—the sight of the revolver in Johnny's hand seems a natural weapon for a boy whose resentment against society has unhappily come in his adolescent years. Our sympathy

"... promises to sin no more"

is for Johnny, and had the film attempted to explain his attitude and to understand his problems it might well have been a powerful indictment against society and the means of raising the standard of education and of lowering America's pride in her reformatories.

—A.B.C., *World Film News*

The world makes its mark on the hero of *Little Tough Guy* when he is very young and impressions are the strongest. His father has been condemned to death for accidentally killing a man, and the resentment aroused by this act of injustice leads to the boy becoming head of a gang of young hooligans and outlaws. The climax of the film occurs when the boy comes to his inevitable end. He is trapped in a small shop, but cannot believe that he can safely surrender. Obviously the police, who are prepared to kill the father, will make no bones about shooting the son. The film is exciting to watch, but we are to suppose that something lies behind it, though what that may be is difficult to define. But perhaps we need not worry too much. It is nice to think that some social good may result from *Little Tough Guy*. What affects one at the moment is that it is grandly acted by some of the kids who were in *Dead End*, and makes a very good way of spending an evening.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

Having Wonderful Time

(Alfred Santell—RKO Radio).
Ginger Rogers, Douglas Fairbanks, jun., Peggy Conklin.

In the charm of the young people whom Mr. Kober describes, in their eagerness and unexpected little anxieties, their precise culture, and some of their very human qualities, which he has caught so perfectly, there is a hint at times of an author of a very different world, even of Thrums. It has occurred to me that Mr. Kober may turn out to be a Barrie of his own world, a Bronx Barrie, which should be no title to be scorned. Unlike the play, the movie is about no special people—just about any one of us. In the ingenuous language of the trade, the film has been "de-raced;" and this "de-racing" seems to show that there really isn't much difference in people anyhow.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Arthur Kober's quaint little drama of the Bronx Jew in the Catskill moonlight will never be forgotten in this quarter. It was lovable, folksy, and true. The screenplay made from this distinguished stage presentation is none of these. Mr. Kober is still listed as its author, a fact that must have torn his heart as well as his lines out. It does not mean, however, that you see Teddy and Chick and scores of typical Bronxites trying desperately and hilariously to adjust themselves to rugged sociability. It is a well-groomed typist we see now (Ginger Rogers) and a strangely "couth" Chick (Douglas Fairbanks, jun.), who enact their little story of quick-service romance. There is a background of camp life which still has mannerisms and dialectics from the original, but it's folk drama without the folks now. Along this new path the director has added gags and scenes and bits of variety that make the picture lots of fun (the backgammon game, the *Heigh-Ho* motif), and there is an unalterable quality of good fellowship; but it's not the Kamp Kare-Free we remember with such pleasure. Perhaps this is unfair. Perhaps we should remember that we had a wonderful enough time at the new *Having Wonderful Time. Oh! but it could have been so much more wonderful.*

—*The Stage*

Algiers

(John Cromwell—United Artists).
Charles Boyer, Sigrid Gurie, Hedy Lamarr.

With a superb clarity, we are shown the Casbah, slum district of a hot Algerian town where Pépé le Moko is king. Pépé is a famous underworld figure who dominates his Casbah kingdom with heartiness and generosity. The little plottings of the picture take place in this squalid, labyrinthine section and a more realistic setting for a drama of glamour is hard to imagine. The exotic fantasy of Pépé and his hideout subjects has a firmness and a gentle imaginative quality that give it many moments of beauty. Cooped up as the story is in these tedious surroundings, it suffers sometimes from repetition and inaction. The monotony in the lives of the characters somehow seeps into the continuity, yet there is a strange emphasis in the sameness of its mood. Charles Boyer is impressive in his role as the impulsive Pépé, and Joseph Calleia strikes a difficult sympathetic note as the sinister Casbah commissioner.

—*Stage*

The Casbah, the native quarter of Algiers, is a maze of crooked alleyways, terraces, winding flights of steps. A man such as Pépé le Moko, wanted by the French police, might go in safety there until he dies, chatting with the police inspector daily, secure in his sanctuary but equally sure of arrest the moment he leaves it. But a man such as Pépé le Moko, with the perfume of the boulevards in his nostrils, could not endure being the Casbah's prisoner all his life. Nostalgia would drive him out, or love for a woman. Inspector Slimane knew that when he smiled at Pépé every day. He was content to wait.

That is the theme of *Algiers*. It is a fascinating drama of a manhunt, a manhunt made all the more relentless because the hunters never really give pursuit, because the hunted never really is in flight. There are terror and suspense in a chase, but there are still more when the cat plays a waiting game, and the mouse creeps obediently, helplessly into its claws. John Cromwell, who has directed the film, has wound the drama's mainspring tight. Its seconds tick off like a pulsebeat in an accelerating rhythm of destiny—hopeless, inexorable, tragic destiny. Few films this season or any other, have sustained their mood so brilliantly.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

The Sheik

(George Melford—Paramount).
Rudolph Valentino, Agnes Ayres, Adolphe Menjou.

"When you go amongst women," said Nietzsche, "don't forget your whip." And the interesting thing about this philosophy is that it seems to find its warmest admirers amongst women. Male authors through the centuries may praise the chivalry, the sentimentality, of the Man of Feeling, they may weep over Richardson's heroines (hard-pressed in 50 instalments) and Dickens' Nancy, victim of a cruel man's lust. Women seem to find all this fuss rather tiresome. Is it a racial memory, a hangover from the old chattel days, or just one phase of that tendency to worship the strange, the enormous and the terrible, which is the basis of the Romantic Movement in literature and Totalitarianism in politics?

Whatever the answer, it is a fact that some of the most popular and (from the psychological point of view) most significant writers of our time have derived their appeal from the masochistic instinct of women readers. Miss Ethel Dell wrote of the strong, ugly Nordic hero who ruthlessly killed enemies and galloped horses to death; Miss E. M. Hull of the desert chieftain (also revealed to be Nordic in the last chapter) who kidnapped the proud heroine, laughed at her threats, humbled her pride, subdued her to his will, and was at last rewarded with her love. The position of the heroine of this school is approximately that of the high-spirited filly which learns to like bridle and saddle and come whinnying for a nice piece of sugar at sound of the master's step. This, apparently, is what the average woman enjoys—vicariously, at all events, in fiction. That the appeal of *The Sheik* was in its psychology rather than its literary graces is clear from the fact that the tale had an even more sensational success when Paramount brought it to the screen, with Rudolph Valentino as the Sheik Ahmed Ben Hassan, and Agnes Ayres as Lady Diana Mayo, the "beautiful, haughty English tourist".

For Valentino *The Sheik* completed what *The Four Horsemen* had begun; women fans in six continents talked of no one else. Earlier stars—Maurice Costello, Earle Williams, William Farnum, Francis X. Bushman, Wallace Reed—had been admired, even loved.

With Valentino we detect a new note of passion, often verging on hysteria. Thousands of silly, adoring creatures wrote begging not merely for photographs, letters, souvenirs, but for a rendezvous. They were sure that if they could only meet him they could win his love; and if afterwards they were cast off, no matter; they would count an hour or two happiness enough. All of which was madly gratifying to his employers and bewildering to the nice, bourgeois young man whose real ambition has always been to be a farmer.

Valentino's extraordinary life and fantastic death and funeral do not concern us here; one can only speculate, looking at *The Sheik*, on what it was about him that stirred women everywhere so strangely.

Well, in the first place, he was uncommonly handsome. He was not tall—about five feet nine, at a guess—but his figure was well proportioned and muscular, his head well shaped and his face young and vital. His mouth was firmly chiselled, his jaw was lean, his nostrils had a flare that hinted at cruelty. His eyes had a Latin warmth which not even the naïveté of the sentiments he was called upon to express can wholly disguise; and I imagine that in real life, with no need to leer down at captive blondes while the camera turned and the director shouted orders ("Grab her wrist—laugh at the knife—you've got her in your power!"), his smile was singularly charming. All these things helped, but were they enough to account for the effect he had on women? I have reflected carefully, since seeing *The Sheik* again, on Valentino's qualities and the parts he played in relation to stars who came before and after him, and I think I know the answer. His appeal was due to the fact that he was the first hero frankly to exploit sex.

In earlier films the leading man was properly heroic; villains might think of sex; the hero, before the shy proposal at the garden shrine, never. This tradition still lingers on in Westerns, where the hero, no matter how burning the Texas sun, invariably removes his Stetson when about to propose marriage.

Valentino, for the first time, combined the sex menace of the scoundrel with the good looks and charm of the hero: and the effect on women was devastating. The menace, the challenge to virtue and pride, were still there, but it was a menace they only half feared, an attack to which they longed to surrender. The combined effect of good looks and virility in the loved one, and masochism, the desire to abase oneself, in the loving, produced such a wave of hysterical devotion as no other man has inspired before or since.

Valentino, after his death, became a cult, still kept up by clubs which bear his name and keep his memory green for worthy purposes. I advise his followers—now diminishing, I suppose—not to see *The Sheik* again; the story that thrilled millions is now much funnier than the new Laurel and Hardy or Harold Lloyd. Try as you will to follow the story sympathetically, you find yourself continually rocking at the orgy of eye-rolling, leers, and proud tossings of the head, the violent starts of surprise and gusty sighs,which belonged to a technique as ludicrous to-day as the "Aha's" and boot-slapping and green lights of *Sweeny Todd*.

If you have ever mourned the passing of the silents, if you feel tempted, as we all do sometimes, to lament the days when actors were really actors and films kept us on the edge of our seat, you have only to see *The Sheik* to realise that the fault is not in the stars, but in ourselves. We were young, and we are not; and whatever compensations the years may bring, they take away the first essential of the fan; I mean the capacity for wonder.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Critical Summary.

Not even a surrealist need have feared Mr. Rudolph Valentino as the subject of his painting. Whatever false colours the painter cared to use, the sitter would always have found admirers to detect in the finished portrait the true embodiment of their own desires. Whether he was upright, crooked or bedridden, the figure of Mr. Valentino was sure to dominate at least half the feminine world. His kisses, like the rays of a brilliant sun, scorched the lips of all in his arid deserts. His glances were either welcome threats or pleasurable requests; his anger a sign of virility, his silences a sure indication of the nobility, or as many would have it, the ignobility of his thoughts. In common with Napoleon, he had hopes of joining the East with the West.

Gold Is Where You Find It

(Michael Curtiz—Warner Bros.).
Claude Rains, George Brent, Olivia de Havilland.

The time is 1877; the place the Sacramento Valley in California; the quarrel, between the farmers in the valley and the miners above, who, by means of high-pressure streams of water from "hydraulic monitors" are washing the hillside away in their search for gold and smothering the wheatfields below with gallons of liquid mud. In its way it is a great theme, and the film, which is in Technicolor, treats it well. Some of the colour in these scenes is extraordinarily fine, and so is some of the acting: Claude Rains, for example, is admirable as the active, dignified, conscientious leader of the farmers. But after nearly two hours of fine, genuinely beautiful scenes, the film has to end on a sort of Art Plate line—two lovers silhouetted beside No. 6 salmon-red artificial sunset. This is, to put it mildly, a pity. I advise you to leave at the end of the court scene.

—R. M., *Punch*

Gold Is Where You Find It is good old-fashioned cinema: a war between brutal gold miners, assisted by unscrupulous money-bosses and slimy lawyers, and simple farmers whose land is being ruined by the mud from the mines. Miss Olivia de Havilland comes out rather beautifully in Technicolor, and Mr. George Brent is the hero—it's that kind of film: a Montague-Capulet plot and decorative Victorian dresses and a waster's heroic death and a bar-room fight and a sermon from the bench and a fade-out at sunset. Technicolor is at its dubious best in a picture like this—though the painted backgrounds in the long shots are dreadful: it all adds to the delicious self-pity, the glowing adolescent agony. It's jam but good jam—with a few better moments you don't often find in films like this, and Mr. Claude Rains, as the farmers' leader, is chiefly responsible for these. His precise, fine voice can give a chisel edge to the flatest sentiments.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

The Boy from Barnardo's

(Sam Wood—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).
Freddie Bartholomew, Mickey Rooney, Herbert Mundin, Gale Sondergaard.

How curious it is that the very qualities the director of *The Boy From Barnardo's* finds commendable should prove from our standpoint despicable. Some admirable sentiments as to the loyalty to be expected from members of the school strike on the car with the force of "boloney", to use an American term. Nationally, I think we have a strong dislike of parading the efficiency and merits of our public institutions and services, and there is much to be said for a policy that allows good to speak for itself without exploding into plauditions that smell perilously of propaganda. All through this film I had an uncomfortable suspicion, which I was assured was unjustified, that the picture had been subsidised partly by Dr. Barnardo's Homes and partly by the Cunard Company, so flawless were each of these enterprises shown to be and so superior to criticism. Cheques for a million dollars from each concern would be inadequate rewards.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

This film has been less favourably received by many critics than *Little Tough Guy*, but it seems to us very much better entertainment. The story is ingenuous, and the script undistinguished, but the photography is pleasing and the pace tolerably fast. Those of us who, some thirty years ago, endured lantern-lectures at our prep. schools about "The Largest Family in the World" will recognise that this film represents a staggering progress in the publicity-methods of the Barnardo Homes, but the entertainment is very brief compared with films about children made on the Continent. Mr. Bartholomew is admirable in the early part of the film, though his regeneration does not convince. Hollywood has made a laudable effort to keep out the American accent, but we doubt if old Barnardo boys would recognise their school. If you can see the uplift about *esprit de corps*, the *Queen Mary* and all that, this film is excellent entertainment.

—*The New Statesman and Nation*

Liszt Rhapsody

(Carmine Gallone—German).

Liszt Rhapsody rambles with demure gaiety and occasional dignity through the ornate salons of the sixties, picking up music wherever it goes. It is a very pleasant piece, but it does ramble! The story, lifted from a novel by Ernst von Wolzogen, sets forth a young pianist's trials and tribulations caused (*a*) by his pretty pupil's slaughter of Liszt's Rhapsody, (*b*) by his pretty pupil's charms, and (*c*) by an unworthy rival's slanderous attacks. A gentle story, directed by Carmine Gallone with due appreciation of the arts and graces of its subject, though inclined to skip from place to place with slightly disconcerting suddenness. Admirably played by the whole company and carried "on the wings of music" to a happy climax, the picture, with its polished settings, beguiles the eye and the ear alike.

—M. E. M., *The Sketch*

As for *Liszt Rhapsody*, it is a routine German musical romance with more humour and less beer and balloons than usual. A lot of the picture is shot in Rome—very pleasantly, with broken pillars and wild flowers and period parasols, but with no purpose that I can see, except to advertise the strength of the Rome-Berlin axis. The Teutons in their tight trousers strut amiably like cocks, lifting up their little claws disdaining bird seed, setting all the hens in a bustle of love or hate, and Liszt himself—that doubtful dog—appears angelically to help the young people to pair off.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

SEPTEMBER RELEASES

Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs *** (RKO Radio)
PRODUCER: Walt Disney
(Reviewed April)

The Hurricane (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: John Ford
STARRING: Jon Hall, Dorothy Lamour, Raymond Massey, Mary Astor
(Reviewed February)

Test Pilot (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Victor Fleming
STARRING: Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy
(Reviewed July)

A Yank at Oxford (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Jack Conway
STARRING: Robert Taylor, Maureen O'Sullivan, Griffith Jones, Vivien Leigh, Lionel Barrymore
(Reviewed May–June)

Bluebeard's Eighth Wife (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Ernst Lubitsch
STARRING: Gary Cooper, Claudette Colbert
(Reviewed May–June)

Mad About Music (Universal)
DIRECTOR: Norman Taurog
STARRING: Deanna Durbin, Herbert Marshall, Gail Patrick
(Reviewed May–June)

Tovarich (Warner Brothers)
DIRECTOR: Anatole Litvak
STARRING: Charles Boyer, Claudette Colbert, Basil Rathbone
(Reviewed March)

The First Hundred Years (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Richard Thorpe
STARRING: Robert Montgomery, Virginia Bruce

Sally, Irene and Mary (Twentieth Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: William A. Seiter
STARRING: Alice Faye, Tony Martin, Jimmy Durante, Gregory Ratoff

Walking Down Broadway (Twentieth Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Norman Foster
STARRING: Claire Trevor, Phyllis Brooks, Michael Whalen

Texas Trail (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Dave Selman
STARRING: William Boyd, Russell Haydon, George Hayes

Flea with Me

Blood donors are being sought among the Paramount studio property men to provide nourishment for Sam and Sadie, the 'human' fleas sent to Hollywood from Hubert's Museum Flea Circus in New York City, which will appear in 'Zaza'.

Instructions from the circus were to the effect that these were not cat or dog fleas but 'human' fleas imported from Europe and require human blood for nourishment.

A bonus of of 100 dollars was offered for any property man who would serve as a 'flea commissary' during the fleas' engagement. There have been no takers.

—*News Item*

Another striking example of the way the best talent of all worlds is drawn into the Hollywood vortex. It is reported that hundreds of film-struck fleas are making the long hop to the coast and the Central Casting Bureau are being worried all day long by the persistence of the visitors. "We have had so many drop in on us just lately," said an official, rubbing the small of his back meditatively against a projection, "that we have some difficulty in keeping track of their movements." A number of tough flea aspirants, laughingly referred to as the "Dead End Kids", have been making themselves felt at smart Beverley Hills soirées, and there have been several ugly scenes between the tiny visitors and the germs who appeared in *Yellow Jack*, who not unnaturally resent the invasion.

A well-known Hollywood director said: "I would not advise any flea to give up a good position to come to Hollywood. The best jobs are already filled and the best a flea can hope for is 'bits'. There is only hunger and heartbreak in Hollywood for fleas, even though a lot of other germs have managed to carve an itch for themselves."

An interesting echo on this subject reaches us from an English studio. A small frustrated-looking man who had been seen hanging around the lot for some weeks was eventually identified as a 'flea canteen' attached to the cast of a new production entitled *A Leap in the Dark*, described as a biting portrayal of back-stage life in a flea-circus, its set-backs and sudden tragedies, set against a vivid human background.

It is said to be fascinating to watch how these flea film-stars model their styles of acting on those of famous human players. One of the fleas has been seen around in goloshes and a mackintosh, snubbing people.

"The chief difficulty is to find enough human blood for them in a film studio," said a well-known producer, treading something into the carpet with a light laugh.

FOOT SLOGGER

Alice Faye came out of a scuffle with Warner Baxter in "By the Dawn's Early Light" with a swollen jaw the other day. And you didn't have to ask which side of Baxter's face stopped her slipper.

—*News Item.*

Oh, I'll never covet
(Though others may love it)
The gaining of fame—it's a bore;
Nor have I a yen for
A shinier ten-four
Than that of the people next door—
Nor crave I the job as the Queen Mary's skipper
Half as much as a slap from Miss Alice Faye's slipper.

Now your pet ambition
May be for position,
Or maybe on titles you're keen.
While *you*, sir, may struggle
For wealth, so you'll juggle
Your way to a job on the screen.
But only one thing have *I* craved since a nipper—
And that is a wallop from Alice Faye's slipper.

Oh, I've received bruises
From all sorts of floosies
And scars from their furious beaux;
The surgeon's sharp scissors
Have left me some fizzers
Which I'm always ready to show.
But the scar I'd display with the speed of a zipper
Would be the one made by Miss Alice Faye's slipper.

Now some men make much of
The oft-quoted touch of
A warm summer breeze from the south,
While other men favour
The good frothy flavour
Old ale's apt to leave round the mouth.
But the touch on the face I'd consider a ripper.
Would be made by the heel of Miss Alice Faye's slipper.

Not a lady-like knock
But a real good sock—
Yes, a sock on the kisser from Alice Faye's slipper.

SPORTS BULLETIN

Robert Taylor is giving Barbara Stanwyck a tennis court for a birthday present.

—News Item

He must have been letting the grass grow under his feet.

STOP PRESS NEWS

Owing to action by the Censorship Office we regret that Snooks Grieser's contribution to this page will not appear, as was announced in last month's issue. Leading figures in public life to whom we showed the rough draft described it variously as scurrilous, anti-social and a blow at the very roots of British home-life and right thinking. Even with the limericks taken out it was condemned.

It is hoped that Grieser, who is at present being held by the Skegness police in connection with a fracas at a holiday camp, will be released in time to submit a more suitable contribution to the October issue.

An alternative column, submitted by Grieser's mother, described as a witty, well-informed causerie of Stepney society and entitled "Round the Boozers," was even worse. It even shocked our secretary.

Thoughts in a Restaurant, not a million miles from Piccadilly

The food on other people's dishes
Always looks much more delicious
Than the heap of skin and bone
Served to us upon our own.
Other people's food and liquor
Seems to reach them so much quicker—
But this is what makes *me* so truculent—
It always *sounds* so much more succulent.

A film-loving lady of Surbiton
Left the stove she was steaming some turbot on.
When she came back at nine
The cat had done fine
And her husband had left her, but she should worry,
she'd just been to a cinema that had
a film featuring Hugh Herbert on.

SAYINGS

"If you play Bach in America you starve to death."—*Fats Waller.*

"Wherever there is a Lady Godiva there always seems to be trouble."—*A High Wycombe carnival organiser.*

LORUM

TIME MARCHES ON: Sweating Slightly

More euphonious telephone bells, lights, soft buzzers—"or some device less liable to distract the household or disturb invalids and children"—are suggested by the Socialist M.P. for West Leyton.
—News Item.

How well the film fraternity are looked after by our Socialist M.P.'s is indicated by that telling phrase—"less liable to distract invalids and children."

I have been worrying my pretty little head (it's my brother who has the two heads) a good deal lately about this vexed question of more euphonious telephone bells. I even went further than that. Why, I reasoned, should the telephone's duty be limited to attracting our attention to the fact that someone has called our number by mistake? Why indeed! Think of the hundred and one other helpful little actions it could be made to perform.

With me, to think is to act. Night after night, behind the sealed doors of the W.F.N. Research Laboratories, I slaved over hot retorts and when at last I straightened up I held in my hand the first humanised telephone, if you can imagine that.

You can't? Well, let me explain it for you. With that well-known whimsicality that has caused many a bottle to be tossed laughingly at me across saloons, I have called my invention "Fussy Fanny", after an aunt of mine called Fussy Fanny.

Occupying not more than 100 square feet when in repose, it is obvious that "Fussy Fanny" will not in any way clutter a film executive's desk or cause him to feel embarrassed. When a subscriber rings the executive's number it causes a small loudspeaker on a metal arm to shoot out to within two inches of the executive's ear. Here it stops, quivering, and if you have ever been within two inches of an executive's ear you will know why.

Now the chances are that the executive is (a) asleep; (b) in a trance, thinking lovely pale blue thoughts about the lift-girl; (c) unable to answer because his finger is jammed in the top drawer where he keeps his cachous.

Let us suppose that the executive is asleep—nothing wrong in that, is there? Very well—upon receiving no reply, a small voice from the loudspeaker says "Yoo-hoo, Mr. Ginsberg!" If there is still no response, the machine, in a rather louder voice, says "Snap out of it, you big slob."

Here the executive stirs, his little cheeks flushed with sleep, and murmurs something about percentages. At this the machine gets really mad, and, taking a step back, fetches the executive a smart bust in the snoot. Executives being what they are, there is very little chance of the machine missing. The executive opens one eye and stifles a yawn with a dimpled hand. This is the chance the machine has been waiting for. "You're wanted on the telephone, Mr. Ginsberg," it says. "Let's answer it, shall we?" It then proceeds to do up any odd buttons that may be undone, brush the cigar-ash from his waistcoat and with infinite tenderness remove an errant lock of hair that has fallen roguishly over his eyes. The machine then punches him in the kidneys and retires archly to a far corner, where it peeps at him round the filing-cabinet. "Catch me if you can," it pipes and such a chase follows as you never saw. Over the furniture, in and out of the cloakrooms (and on one memorable occasion, right down the lift-shaft!)—with Fussy Fanny always one jump ahead of its plump little pursuer.

For an extra two pounds the machine can be fitted with a special attachment which, in the event of a subscriber ringing, removes the secretary from the executive's knee and takes her into a corner where it talks to her gravely about the danger of such behaviour. And hardly is the secretary out of the door, sobbing as if her shoulder-straps would break, before Fussy Fanny has taken a running jump on to the executive's knee and is twining a coy metal finger in one of the frayed button-holes of the man's hacking-jacket. Ah, youth! youth!

LOVE and HISSES

I'm glad there's not another
Ritz Brother.

I often give thanks
For Leslie Banks.

Tyrone Power
Makes me glower.

Claude Rains
Would seem to have brains

I could easily fall
For Evelyn Dall.

We would do much better to contemplate
our nivals
Than a good many of these revivals.

Robert Flaherty
Is the life of the paherty.

I really can see no
Reason for bringing back the films of
Valentino.

Hell—another "A" film!

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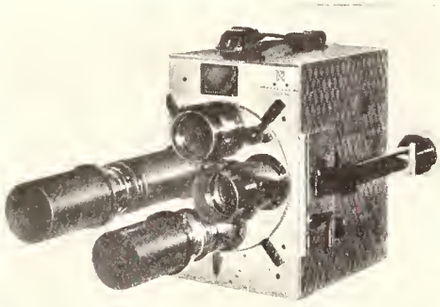

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THE ONLY BRITISH TECHNICAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY FILM TECHNICIANS FOR FILM TECHNICIANS

"I MUST THANK ALISTAIR COOKE"

writes Radio critic George Audit who discusses the successful items of American life that have enlivened a dull month's programmes.

LOOKING back over the weeks of hotel music and seaside entertainment that fill the programme time while B.B.C. producers are on holiday with (as they suppose) their listeners, I must thank Mr. Alistair Cooke for the few outstanding items.

Before I go on to describe Mr. Cooke's remarkable programmes I must briefly mention Mr. D. G. Bridson's work during the summer. Not that he is now in any danger of being overlooked, as he was for so long. London is now only too glad to relay one of his shows to brighten up an evening's entertainment. For he is still the only practising producer with an unerring sense of radio. He can make a feature of anything from an industry to an eighteenth century novel without getting lost in his subject or his material. His programmes on Cotton, Wool, and the Sterne's Sentimental Journey have all been worth a seven days' run, and that's saying a good deal.

Mr. Alistair Cooke has been busy in America. He has come back with some astonishing recordings of American folk-songs. He has arranged these under some dozen subjects, such as Negroes, Go West Young Man, the Railroads and the Big City, and has threaded them up with short descriptions of the historical movements they represent. Some of the records are the good old songs at their best. Clementine, Casey Jones and Frankie and Johnny sung in their fruity mother tongue. But others are almost incredible. A convict gang grunting out a dirge. A gang of sweating negroes laying a railway track in the South, and the foreman wails his exhortations above the clang of the metal. A disappointed hobo romances on his Big Rock Candy Mountains. Dope songs, cowboy songs, river songs. All these have very little to do with the America we know, the land of Edgar G. Hoover or Damon Runyan or President Roosevelt, but it flashes up a picture of the American people that I can never forget. This is folk-song in a terribly literal meaning of the words. Nothing to do with Mock Morris and Hey Nonny Nonny, but the sighs and aspirations of real people. Does nothing like it exist here? Are we, as a race compared with the polyglot Americans, dead from the larynx up? If we are not, it is suprising that Mr. Grierson or Mr. Bridson have not made use of similar sources.

Mr. Cooke also had his hand in the production of *Job to be Done*, a documentary of American industry written for the Columbia Workshop by Pare Lorentz. It was produced here by Laurence Gilliam, as nearly as possible, exactly as it was done in New York. Americans with genuine Texas, Alabama, Kansas and Massachusetts accents were selected to play the parts.

To the British public that only knows America through Hollywood this feature must have offered a new experience. It tried to show a picture of the character of American industry. After a lot of description and statistics you get a close-up of an automobile plant. There is a drop in sales. Cut down production. Lay off workers. One of these unwanted workers, numbered 7790 when he applies for relief, sets off West in search of better times. Stopping at a filling station in Kansas, he chats with other job-hunters heading North, South, East and West. The picture they present is pretty gloomy. Suddenly 7790 becomes inspired with a propaganding spirit for the Government, and in spite of all objections such as one that you "can't eat the Boulder Dam", works himself into a frenzy of optimism, affirming that a society which has changed the course of rivers and blown up mountains will also be able to feed its people. Briefly, that is the story. Good documentary material. I guess it would have made a good script for a short film. In fact Pare Lorentz knows how to make a good picture, witness his *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River*. But there is a difference between film and radio.

The best effects in radio, being essentially a *home* medium, are achieved by *intimacy*. The medium does not lend itself to shouting and declamation. Therefore, you can either employ an agent, like Harry Hopeful, who will draw the story out of the other characters and with whom the listener identifies himself; or else your characters must address the microphone in such a manner that the listener is persuaded that the story is being told to him personally. In film, where the camera generally plays the role of eavesdropper, there is no occasion for such intimate treatment. Apply this standard to *Job to be Done*, and you would see that its technique is unsuitable for radio. The characters never talk to each other; they speak in dialogue form, but in fact that take turns in addressing the whole wide world. Mr. Lorentz would probably say that he tried to be objective and to make his characters represent types. Unfortunately the effect of that method is to weaken the emotional hold on the listener. You can only get a hold on your listener by making him identify himself with your characters. And you can only do that by intimacy, by letting your characters talk as man to man, about the little things in their jobs, their jokes, their hopes and disappointments.

Mr. Bridson can do this to perfection and that is why his programmes sound so unusual. *Job to be Done* should be taken as a warning to producers who attempt to apply documentary film methods to radio in too mechanical a way.

The third programme for which Mr. Cooke is responsible is entitled *The Day and the Tune*. His idea is to invite listeners to submit their reasons for having a strong association of ideas with any popular tune. The subject obviously lends itself to sentiment and Mr. Cooke is apparently being swamped with honeymoon airs. But there are others. A Yorkshire farmer, for instance had a nervous cow that would only let him milk her if he whistled the tune of Killarney!

A year ago last May we wrote here that B.B.C. announcers had become "but shadows, poor anonymous abstractions, tied to a script". We deplored the change from the early days of broadcasting when an announcement by Rex Palmer or Cecil Lewis was something more than a reading of words. We pleaded for an announcer who was an *individual*, and not a mere voice. The B.B.C. has now changed its policy in this respect. Announcers are being written up in the "Radio Times." Even their hobbies and home life are being dragged out! The change is for the better, but if they swing too far the other way listeners may begin to suspect a motive.

George Audit

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gasparcolour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.

BELFAST: Crumlin	Sept. 5, 3 days
CHEADLE: Osborne	Sept. 5, 3 days
LEEDS: Gainsboro'	Sept. 8, 3 days
NEWMILLS: Picture House	Sept. 16, 2 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Comedy	Sept. 29, 3 days
STANDISH: Palace	Sept. 15, 3 days
TOW LAW: Palace	Sept. 8, 3 days
WETHERBY: Picture House	Sept. 15, 3 days

Coal Face (Poetic treatment of coal-mining).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
SOUND PRODUCTION: Alberto Cavalcanti.

TILBURY: Palace	Sept. 1, 3 days
VICTORIA: News Theatre	Sept. 12, 3 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw.

ANSTRUTHER: Regal	Sept. 15, 3 days
NEWCASTLE: Gem	Sept. 19, 3 days
NEWCASTLE: Picturedrome	Sept. 22, 2 days
RUSH: Savoy	Sept. 15, 2 days
VICTORIA: News Theatre	Sept. 26, 4 days

Down to the Sea.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BIRKENHEAD: Gaumont	Sept. 5, 6 days
BISHOPS STORTFORD: Phœnix	Sept. 5, 3 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	Sept. 5, 6 days
KIRKCALDY: Rialto	Sept. 15, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont, Princes Park	Sept. 19, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Magnet	Sept. 8, 3 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Plaza	Sept. 1, 7 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

ADLINGTON: Cinema	Sept. 15, 3 days
ARDROSSAN: Lyric	Sept. 1, 2 days
BELFAST: Alhambra	Sept. 15, 3 days
BELFAST: New Princess	Sept. 19, 3 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric	Sept. 1, 2 days
LARNE: Regal	Sept. 8, 3 days
MONAGHAN: Town Hall	Sept. 8, 3 days
MOSTON: M.I.P.	Sept. 15, 4 days
NEWTON STEWART: Picture House	Sept. 8, 2 days
VICTORIA: News Theatre	Sept. 22, 4 days

Lancashire Lakeland (Scenic beauties of Lakeland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CLEVELEYS: Odeon	Sept. 22, 3 days
LONDON: Blue Hall, Edgware Road	Sept. 12, 7 days
LONDON: State, Thornton Heath	Sept. 19, 7 days
WEYMOUTH: Regent	Sept. 4, 1 day

Land o' Clans.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BISHOPS STORTFORD: Regent	Sept. 26, 6 days
DUNDEE: Empire	Sept. 22, 3 days
DUNDEE: Odeon	Sept. 22, 3 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	Sept. 26, 3 days
LONDON: Blue Hall, Edgware Road	Sept. 19, 7 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	Sept. 22, 3 days
PRESTWICH: Odeon	Sept. 12, 3 days
SHIRLEY: Odeon	Sept. 5, 6 days
SHREWSBURY: Granada	Sept. 12, 6 days
SUTTON COLDFIELD: Odeon	Sept. 5, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	Sept. 5, 6 days

Land of the Marimba.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARROW: Regal	Sept. 19, 6 days
BARNSLEY: Princess	Sept. 29, 3 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 26, 3 days
CHORLEY: Odeon	Sept. 19, 6 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	Sept. 18, 4 days
DENNISTOUN: Picture House	Sept. 8, 3 days

FILMS
at the
TATLER THEATRE
Charing Cross Road

Sept. 5 — *North Sea*
Highlands of Rhodesia
New Audioscopics

Sept. 12 — *Kings in Exile* (G.B.I.)

Sept. 26 — *Tale of Two Abbeys*
The Ship That Died
Fruit in Jamaica

GLOSSOP: Empire	Sept. 19, 3 days
GOVANHILL: Picture House	Sept. 1, 3 days
LANCASTER: County	Sept. 26, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Corona	Sept. 5, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Empress	Sept. 12, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Magnet	Sept. 12, 6 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Sept. 15, 3 days
MANSFIELD: Rock	Sept. 29, 3 days
PRESTWICH: Odeon	Sept. 5, 3 days
SOWERBY BRIDGE: Electric	Sept. 15, 3 days
WAKEFIELD: Carlton	Sept. 29, 3 days

Low Commotion.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

DUNOON: La Scala	Sept. 1, 3 days
NORTHAMPTON: Exchange	Sept. 5, 6 days
MALVERN: Theatre	Sept. 22, 3 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	Sept. 12, 6 days

Mountain Barriers.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BIRKENHEAD: Gaumont	Sept. 26, 6 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 29, 3 days
CHICHESTER: Gaumont	Sept. 19, 3 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	Sept. 29, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Sept. 29, 3 days
DUMFRIES: Regal	Sept. 22, 3 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	Sept. 5, 3 days
GOVANHILL: Picture House	Sept. 15, 3 days
GREENOCK: Regal	Sept. 26, 3 days
HINCKLEY: Odeon	Sept. 29, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	Sept. 8, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Plaza	Sept. 5, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont, Princes Park	Sept. 15, 3 days
MANSFIELD: Empire	Sept. 22, 3 days
MORECAMBE: Odeon	Sept. 4, 7 days
MONMOUTH: Picture House	Sept. 22, 3 days
PORTSMOUTH: Theatre Royal	Sept. 18, 7 days
ROCHESTER: Majestic	Sept. 4, 1 day
ST. ANDREWS: New Picture House	Sept. 26, 3 days
WEYBRIDGE: Odeon	Sept. 11, 1 day
WEYMOUTH: Regent	Sept. 5, 6 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt.

HAMPSTEAD: Playhouse	Sept. 11, 1 day
MILLSTREET: Cinema	Sept. 1, 2 days
MITCHELSTOWN: Grand Central	Sept. 18, 3 days
PONTEFRACT: Alexandra	Sept. 15, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Queens	Sept. 12, 2 days

People in the Parks.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Paul Burnford.

BESWICK: Mosley	Sept. 12, 6 days
CARNFORTH: Roxy	Sept. 1, 3 days
CARNOUSTIE: Pavilion	Sept. 23, 2 days
HIPSWELL: Camp	Sept. 12, 3 days
KINGSWOOD: Ambassadors	Sept. 1, 3 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric	Sept. 15, 2 days
MURTON: Empire	Sept. 5, 3 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Rex	Sept. 29, 3 days
NORTHENDON: Coronation	Sept. 5, 6 days
SOUTH MOOR: Tivoli	Sept. 22, 3 days
WARRINGTON: Odeon	Sept. 15, 3 days
WETHERBY: Picture House	Sept. 22, 3 days

Picture People.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BEBINGTON: Rialto	Sept. 12, 6 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 26, 3 days
GOOLE: Cinema Palace	Sept. 12, 3 days
HULL: Monica	Sept. 5, 3 days
LEEDS: Western Talkies	Sept. 8, 3 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Sept. 5, 3 days
MANSFIELD: Empire	Sept. 19, 3 days

Power.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

AIGBURTH: Rivoli	Sept. 8, 3 days
BELLSHILL: Picture Theatre	Sept. 8, 3 days
BIRKENHEAD: Plaza	Sept. 29, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Sept. 22, 3 days
GAINSBOROUGH: Grand	Sept. 15, 3 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Sept. 8, 3 days
TONBRIDGE: Star	Sept. 1, 3 days
WAKEFIELD: Empire	Sept. 29, 3 days

Sky High.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BLACKPOOL: Jubilee	Sept. 8, 3 days
CROYDON: Savoy	Sept. 4, 1 day

Shorts (contd.)

LONDON: Blue Hall, Edgware Road
Sept. 5, 7 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street
Sept. 8, 3 days
LONDON: Rex, Norbury Sept. 18, 1 day
LONDON: State, Thornton Heath
Sept. 15, 3 days

Town and Gown.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

ALDERSHOT: Alexandra	Sept. 5, 6 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 22, 3 days
HIGH WYCOMBE: Majestic	Sept. 12, 3 days
HOVE: Lido	Sept. 4, 7 days
LONDON: Eros, Piccadilly Circus	Sept. 8, 6 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	Sept. 15, 3 days
WESTBURY: Vista	Sept. 5, 6 days
WINCHESTER: Royal	Sept. 26, 3 days

Tropical Springtime (Travelogue on Costa Rica).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BATH: News Theatre	Sept. 12, 3 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 19, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Sept. 8, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Sept. 5, 3 days
DUNOON: La Scala	Sept. 19, 3 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson.

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GATESHEAD: Ravensworth Sept. 1, 3 days
GIBRALTAR: H.M.S. Cormorant Sept. 5, 21 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric Sept. 1, 2 days
SOUTH MOOR: Tivoli Sept. 22, 3 days
STROMNESS: Cinema Sept. 6, 8 & 10, 3 days
WIGTON: Palace Sept. 29, 3 days

Valleys of Romance.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

ALCESTER: Regent	Sept. 5, 3 days
BARROW: Regal	Sept. 12, 6 days
BIRKENHEAD: Plaza	Sept. 1, 3 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 8, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Sept. 12, 3 days
DALKEITH: Pavilion	Sept. 26, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Sept. 19, 3 days
FRASERBURGH: Picture House	Sept. 29, 3 days
LANCASTER: County	Sept. 19, 6 days
LINLITHGOW: Empire	Sept. 15, 3 days

Way to the Sea (Documentary of the roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes.

ADLINGTON: Cinema	Sept. 15, 3 days
BAMBER BRIDGE: Empire	Sept. 1, 4 days
BRADFORD: Elite	Sept. 19, 3 days
BURNHOPE: Miners	Sept. 30, 2 days
ECCLESFIELD: Cinema	Sept. 1, 3 days
GRANGEVILLA: Pavilion	Sept. 1, 3 days
INVERURIE: Victoria	Sept. 16, 2 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric	Sept. 15, 2 days
MURTON: Olympia	Sept. 8, 3 days

Weather Forecast.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
NEWCASTLE: News Theatre Sept. 12, 6 days

Foreign Films

The Last Night (Russian)
DIRECTOR: Yu. Raizman
STARRING: M. G. Yarotskaya
N. I. Dorokhin
I. R. Peltser
N. N. Ribnikov
LONDON: Academy Indefinitely

Uncle Moses (Yiddish)
PRODUCTION: Yiddish Talking Pictures
DIRECTOR: Aubrey Scotto
STARRING: Maurice Schwartz
Judith Abarbanell
LONDON: Academy Indefinitely
(after *The Last Night*)

L'Homme a Abattre (French)
DIRECTOR: Leon Mathot
STARRING: Jean Murat
Viviane Romance
LONDON: Berkeley Indefinitely
(from Aug. 29)

Extase
DIRECTOR: Gustav Machaty
STARRING: Hedy Lamarr
Aribert Mog
LONDON: Forum Indefinitely

The Emperor of California (German)
DIRECTOR: Luis Trenker
STARRING: Luis Trenker
Viktoria von Ballasko
Reginald Pasch
LONDON: Studio One Indefinitely

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Television

From 'And Now', the new B.B.C. book on Television

HAD there been a television set in the middle of Exmoor there might have been more to this review of August's programmes. But that is a fact which, in itself, is not without interest. Had the B.B.C. been able to bend these rather intractable television waves round to Exmoor, I should have been treated to drama, music and cabaret, and I must honestly ask myself just how much of this I wanted, and equally honestly I must answer myself that on Exmoor I want no cabarets, nor one-act plays by anybody—not even by the B.B.C. This may seem a rather superficial observation, and maybe it is. It is rather obvious that I do not want cabarets on the moors, but I think there is more to it than that.

I am not a Londoner, and though I live in London, there is a whole lot that London generously offers me but in which I am not the least interested—and that goes for the Test Match, too. It goes for cockney comedians in general, and for most of them in particular. It goes for a scad of things that happen on rivers. When I am in the country, in the Midlands and north of the Border, radio hunts me out. Southern English accents follow me into the back streets of Manchester and pierce the blue calm of an evening on the Forth. And I do not like it. I like it even less when more than an accent follows me—when Piccadilly, Big Ben and the London Casino push their way into my provincial peacefulness. Let us be generous to the B.B.C. and admit that they have been good enough to give the provinces and the other kingdoms their local programmes. Having admitted it, that is really all we need to do, for the National programme still floods the provinces and the Regionals carry a London emphasis and an Oxford accent.

But, with television, all is changed. For the moment it seems as though London will have to talk to London and be satisfied: Manchester will talk to Manchester and all the others to all the others, and there is a fair possibility that local colour will have its day. And I think we shall be all the better for it. No matter how grandiosely we talk of the breaking down of barriers, the arts do not really carry very far. It is not the physical barriers of space that offer the resistance, but the mass censorships of tradition and the homogeneous identity in a community of interests. Music carries a good way, and some humour, but the everyday affections and the daily dignities of language and deportment are too domestic to be broadcast widely with great success.

The daily economics do not stand being thrown around either. Not so long ago I was trying to puzzle this problem out in terms of American radio. There, the whole issue is writ much larger, and I came across this illustration. A well-meaning young lady in Chicago broadcast a series of cookery talks on the network. This meant she was talking not merely to the housewives of her city, but to the housewives of that whole gigantic land. Faithfully she told them to take their so much of flour, water, an egg, baking powder and that pinch of salt, and stir them up. Put it in the oven. Just as faithfully, some thousands of good housewives all over the States obeyed the instructions. For a lot of them, things went all right, and in due course the dainty dish came out of the oven, brown and crisp. But for a village or two eight thousand feet up in the Rocky Mountains it was not so good. Loud explosions, accompanied the scattering of frothy lumps of dough to the four winds. Eight thousand feet up means a whole new set of pressures, and Chicago recipes just won't work. At eight thousand feet water boils at 80-odd degrees, and you need to take a deal of trouble to boil an egg. The B.B.C.'s troubles are less spectacular than this, but perhaps for that reason need closer examination. Making a meal of Cornish pasties and Devonshire cream and cider, with lingering memories of hot-pots and Irish stew, I was quite glad that Monsieur Boulestin's cooking demonstration did not carry down to Exmoor.

Even within the regions, the B.B.C. is going to have quite a job selecting its material.

Television is still at its best when it is reporting from the outside, and there is here a chance to do that service of minute reporting of local life and happenings which many critics have been asking of the B.B.C. Amplified by my above provincial remarks, I predict this to be television's strong point all along, and again recommend the B.B.C. producers to think along these lines. I do wish to be reasonable about this, for two reasons—(1) significant outside broadcasts occur during the daytime, and with the exception of Saturday and Sunday, I take it that these day-time hours are not the most popular viewing times; and (2), I saw the broadcast of a shove-halfpenny game. This was something quite remarkable in my viewing experience. It had all the spontaneity of life for which "In Town To-night" has striven and never quite achieved. It had, first of all, the excitement of any real game. I could clearly see every move (or is it shove?). I felt the participants were real, that they were really playing to win, and there was not the smell of a script, nor the slightest evidence of rehearsed dialogue. And this is just as things should be. I can commend Mr. Charles Garner to the ears, eyes and hearts of all viewers. Do not miss him.

The excellent camera work on "The End of the Beginning", by Sean O'Casey made a rather poor and over-acted play at least interesting, and the technical endeavour of "Thank you, Mr. Ghost", had it been achieved, would have brought some distinction to a play so pseudo-metaphysical that even Mr. Priestley would have shut off. "King of the Congo", a travesty with some good light music, had some good material. It was a take-off of the jungle film, and using the Pete Smith technique, it played old Harry with cannibals, missionaries and lonely eyrie in the treetops. Again, borrowing from Pete Smith, the incongruous sound effects were effective and the film cuts of wild animals rallying to Marzipan's call were amusing the first time. Cut down by about seven minutes and with about another three good gags, this item would have been beyond reproach.

Preparations for Radiolympia have clearly robbed August's programmes of meat. With Radiolympia, television makes its first full-dress bow to the public, and as we go to press, the curtain is rising on specially-prepared items and new sets, including some cheap ones. Viewers at Olympia will see the B.B.C.'s offering at its biggest and best. After you have sampled the goods, tell us what you think.

Thomas Baird

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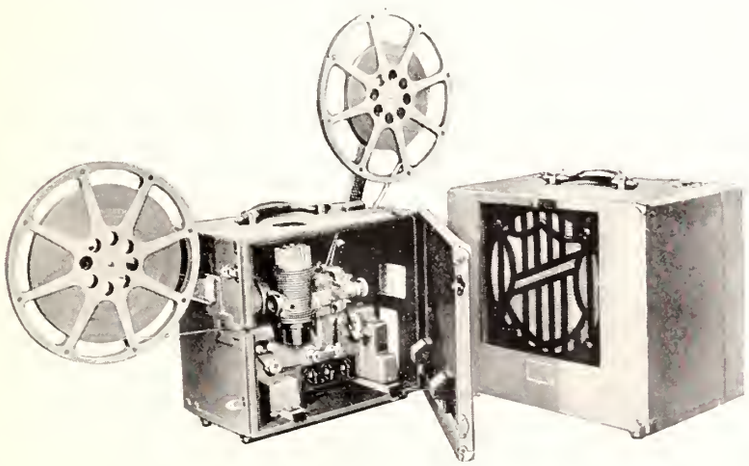

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"Gives one a remarkably clear notion of the Eskimo community."—*The Times.*

"A most attractive and vigorously unconventional piece of writing."—*Evening News.*

"I sat up at night devouring it."—*Julian Huxley.*

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—*Philip Jordan in the News Chronicle.*

"What a man and what a book !"—*E. Arnot Robertson.*

"A great book which Joseph Conrad would have been proud to sign."—*Edward J. O'Brien.*

"The incidents are hewn out of the hard rock of the North : their poetry is Mr. Flaherty's."
—*Times Literary Supplement.*

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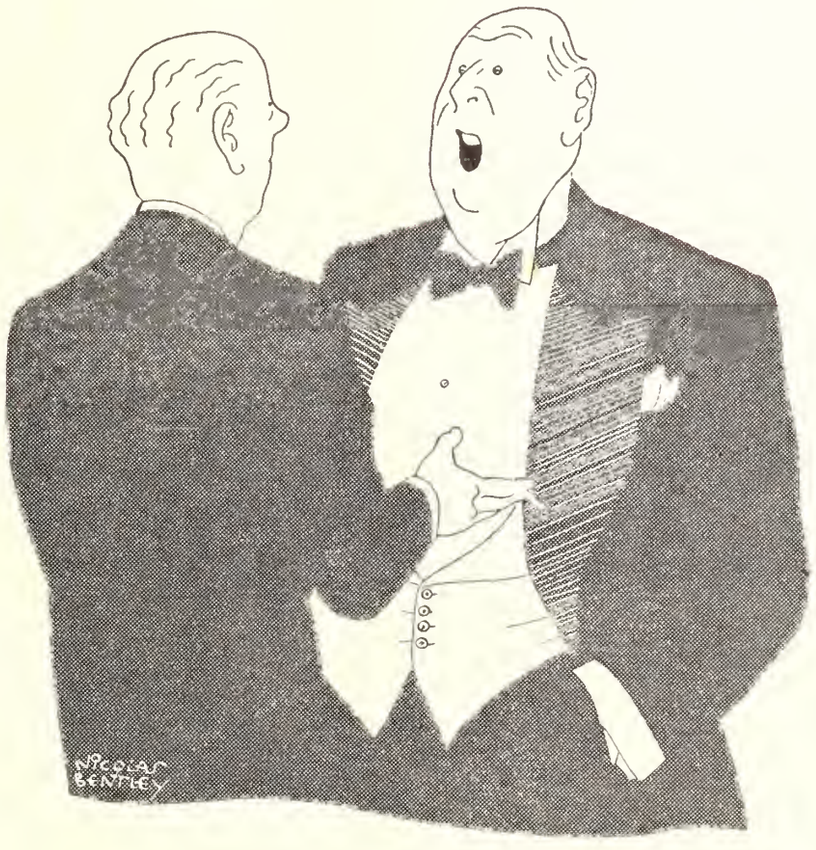
"In my humble opinion"



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SEE

OCTOBER 1938
Vol. 3 No. 6

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Still: from Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympische Spiele*

Pygmalion: reviewed by *David Thompson* 236, 237

The Saga of Jigger Jones: by *Stewart Holbrook* . . 238, 239, 240, 241

The Directorial Touch: by *Ezra Goodman* 242, 243

Oil Beneath the Bough: by *Alexander Shaw* 244, 245

In the Gland Manner: by *Mary Elwyn* 246, 247

Great Heil to Health 248, 249

Bruce at Bombeutta: by *Russell Ferguson* 250, 251

Human Quality: a talk with Will Fyffe by *Thomas Baird* . . 252, 253

The Working Clothes of Demoeraey: by *John Grierson* . . . 254, 255

Hot Potato: Lee Tracy comes to Town, by *Robert Blees* . . 256, 257

In the Name of Goodness: by *John Grierson* 258, 259

Why Sixteen?—Censorship and Children: by *Richard Ford* 261, 262, 263

Spawn of the North, *Marco Polo* and *Blockheads*: reviewed by *Basil Wright* 264, 265

Judgment Seat: a review of reviews edited by *H. E. Blyth* 266, 267. 268. 269

The Captious Title Writer: by *Ezra Goodman* 271

John Henry, Sweet Dream Man of the South: by *Stan Patchett* 272, 273

Veronese Wedding 273, 275

Cockalorum 276, 277

The Citadel: Robert Donat's new film 278, 279

Television: by *Thomas Baird* 280

OPINION

With the great nations blaring their messages across space the quieter aspects of international address do not seem very urgent. Shall we worry about the pictures we show at next year's New York World's Fair when, who knows, it may take a flotilla of destroyers to escort them there? . . .

These pictures we are building up to send overseas may be just as important as the noisy interventions from Godesberg and elsewhere. People were asking, everywhere, where Britain stood in the present war of ideas. . . . One felt that ultimate alliances depended upon that answer.

—*See pages* 254–255

WORLD FILM NEWS

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Bernard Shaw's PYGMALION

The eagerly awaited film, with Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller, exclusively reviewed for SEE by David Thompson

DURING the last few months Mr. Anthony Asquith and Mr. Leslie Howard have donned the guise of movie Pygmalions to bring Mr. George Bernard Shaw's Galatea to life. To carry the analogy further, Messieurs Asquith and Howard have transfused the warm blood of movie life into a pre-war play.

Given the brilliantly perceptive dialogue, the ploughing over of human sub-soil, which is Mr. Shaw's métier, the golden touch of men of perception has transformed *Pygmalion*.

Perhaps the major credit is due to Gabriel Pascal who saw the play's rich possibilities as movie material, given the craftsmen to make it move. It is to his credit that, having this insight, he should have selected a team of translators who have so superbly carried out his conception.

The making of the film has a long history—the securing of Bernard Shaw's collaboration, the putting together of finance at the time of the British film industry's collapse—this last was a triumph over insuperable odds. These things are to the credit of Gabriel Pascal. He has the ingenuity of a jesuit with the rich faith that inspires the jesuit. He needed a jesuitical mind to produce a film while the British film industry was tumbling into chaos. Perhaps no one can assess its tonic importance some months ago when all seemed lost in British films. At that time it caused a revival of financial faith.

Mr. Pascal calls Captain Richard Norton, of Pinewood Studios, where *Pygmalion* was made, "my dearest English friend". It would be only just for Captain Norton to get down on his knees and thank God for Mr. Pascal. The production of this only major film made during the early part of this year must have done much to restore financial confidence. That is seemingly a minor achievement, but there is little confidence in films and in this case faith carried the day and we got a stimulation in British production. Number One Credit to Mr. Pascal.

Number Two Credit for entrusting *Pygmalion* to Mr. Anthony Asquith as director. Asquith has had all the bad breaks the industry can give—production compromise, bad stories, inadequate casts, hack jobs and lackey jobs, but all through his film history he has preserved a directorial integrity. Whenever his films have failed to click—like *Carnival*—whenever they have been popular, there was always some touch of distinction, there was always a director's hand.

It has at times been too delicate; on occasions its effects have been too self-consciously obtained, but there has always been that director's wagging finger to determine the shape of sequences, to determine the content of the screen. The highest virtue a director has is his ability to tell a story; Mr. Asquith is a spinner of stories.

Part of the credit for the making of this film is due to Leslie Howard, for it was his belief in British films that made the picture possible. He foreswore Hollywood contracts and jeopardised his reputation by remaining off the screen for a long period so that *Pygmalion* should be made. He has co-directed the film with Anthony Asquith and has brought his wide knowledge of the best movie traditions to this department.

To all the unit working on this picture goes full marks for the most polished film yet made in Britain. In every technical department the work is flawless. Units brought together for the making of one film tend to produce scrappy results (as instanced by the one-picture habit of to-day's British film industry), but the team spirit engendered by the producers in the making of this film has resulted in a homogeneity which might be the product of a modern American studio. Technically, one cannot praise higher than that.

As a film it is cast-iron Box Office. The story is the good old Cinderella theme, made to measure for the cinema and used countless times in different dress. Mr. Shaw's dramatic dress was very different and the film preserves a great deal of the play's rich qualities of human insight. To the writer, a film motivated by mental reactions is one alien to his conception of movies, but the rich human observation reawakens an interest in people's character. The success in this direction, however, makes for a greater interest in the theatre. That is perhaps the film's greatest triumph and at the same time its greatest weakness. On the one hand it is a superb translation of the stage to the screen—better done than ever before and made into real movie—and yet for the progressive movie it puts up no signposts. If it is movie's only job to entertain, then this film does it brilliantly. Every class, from the eight and sixpennies to the fourpennies, will find their entertainment here. The direction has so dramatized the interplay of human relationships, that when Eliza Doolittle, having been transformed from flower girl to duchess, walks into her first reception that walk is as finely dramatic as any wild west hero riding to the rescue.

The characters are all drawn and played

PYGMALION

With:
LESLIE HOWARD
WENDY HILLER
WILFRID LAWSON
ESME PERCY

Produced by:
GABRIEL PASCAL

Directed by:
ANTHONY ASQUITH and
LESLIE HOWARD

Original Story and Dialogue by:
BERNARD SHAW

Scenario by:
W. P. LIPSCOMB and
CECIL LEWIS

Production Manager:
PHIL C. SAMUEL

Sets designed by:
LAWRENCE IRVING

Assistant Art Director:
JOHN BRYAN

Film Editor:
DAVID LEAN

Camera:
JACK HILDYARD

Original Music by:
ARTHUR HONEGGER

Photography by:
HARRY STRADLING

Assistant Director:
TEDDY BAIRD

Recordist:
ALEX FISHER

larger than life, and yet there is this human quality about them all. Their little vulgar aspirations, their little class ideals, the realization of which is going to have every audience sitting on the edge of its seat.

Pygmalion pushes along like an express. There is only one place in the film where it becomes evident that it is built on dialogue. This place is the penultimate scene between Professor Higgins and Eliza. It would not hurt to prune this sequence down to the first four or five exchanges of dialogue to establish the superficial antagonism. With this section trimmed, the film should race to its end and, if audiences are what they were, they should be standing up and cheering.

Nice things in the film are: Wilfrid Lawson as Eliza's dustman father in the earlier sequences, as nice a piece of caricatured character as seen in recent months; the visual establishment of Leslie Howard as Professor Higgins, elocution expert; the reticence in exploiting the line which made the play famous; the inspired acting of Wendy Hiller in a part where she must convey physical attractiveness with which she is not physically endowed; the excellent casting of the minor parts; the dextrous mixing of real exteriors (particularly happy is Professor Higgins' crossing of Piccadilly Circus); the excellence of the Covent Garden sequence; sets, photography and disposition of crowds.

Bad things in the film are: the over-acting of Esmé Percy (though probably safe for the provinces); the dialogue sequence mentioned before; the colourless housekeeper of Professor Higgins; the painted backing of the Covent Garden scene; the occasional pomposity of the sets.

All the bad things, however, are minor, and do not detract from one of the best films ever made in Britain.

THE SAGA of JIGGER JONES . .

From Stewart Holbrook's 'Holy Old Mackinaw', a natural history of the American Lumberjack, and the finest piece of documentary reporting this year.

(*Courtesy High Commissioner for Canada*)

It was told of Jigger Jones that when he was a young head-chopper in the Maine woods some fifty years ago he would walk a felled spruce, barefoot, and kick off every knot from butt to top. That was before my time in the timber, and I never saw him do it, yet all who knew The Jigger, even in his old age, doubted the report not at all. He was what loggers meant when they said "a rugged man", and he was almost but not quite indestructible.

Jigger Jones also was almost the last of his race—that race of men who cut a swath of timber from eastern Maine to western Oregon and yelled like crazed devils every spring, when the drive was in and they were released from the savage woods for a few days, as they pounded the bars in Bangor, Saginaw, St. Paul and Seattle.

Jigger didn't know it, of course, but his life and especially his death had the dignity and tragedy of a classic pattern. Into them were packed all the three hundred years of experience it required to produce and destroy a unique and mighty race of men. Some of that tribe, as in Jigger's case, were killed physically by civilisation; as for the others, civilisation has mowed them down spiritually —removing the high, wild colour from their lives, ironing flat their personalities, and reducing them to the status of proletarians. The professors would term Jigger's brief story an epitome, and so it was.

I didn't catch up with Jigger Jones until early in 1910. It was at a logging camp in northern New England, and the weather was around thirty-five below, accounted fair coolish even in those parts. Jigger was standing in the camp yard when I, a young punk of a new camp clerk, hove in on the tote team.

Jigger wore neither toque nor mittens, which was unusual in that clime, but I looked first of all at his feet, to know by witness if the legends I had heard about him were true. They were. The Jigger was barefoot. He walked up and down on the packed, creaking snow, passing the time of day with the teamster, and occasionally he would stop and stand on one leg like a stork, rubbing one foot against his pants leg. It was a fact that he never wore socks, summer or winter, except on rare and state occasions such as funerals, when he felt that he should put on all the style possible. Around camp he commonly went barefoot, although he would pull on a pair of shoepacks or rubbers when he went into the woods to take charge of the crew. A red woollen undershirt and drawers and a pair of heavy pants completed his outfit.

Jigger was an excellent foreman in the old tradition. Like all those old camp bosses, he was no mere cog in an industrial machine, a number on a payroll. Jigger was an individual who stood upon his two hind legs and asked no quarter from Man, Capital, or even God, in the form God usually showed Himself to Jigger, which was high water, deep snow, or a thaw in January.

None other than Jigger Jones is credited with the famous lumberjack slogan that would put any chamber of commerce to shame. If on arrival in a new camp he happened to be well oiled, as was usually the case, he was given to letting the boys know about it by roaring "I can run faster, jump higher, squat lower, move sideways quicker, and spit further than any son-of-a-bitch in camp." This genial announcement was always made in good humour, but in good faith as well. If he couldn't live up to quite all of it, he could come near enough to cause grave consideration in the minds of those who thought otherwise.

As a camp push, or foreman, he had few equals. He knew, for instance, when it was going to rain, snow, or freeze at least twenty-fours hours before it happened, no small feat in New England Quebec. When asked what signs he used, he said all he knew about the weather was what he read in the forecasts in *Ayer's Almanac*. He knew to a day, almost, when the ice would go out of any of the stream's tributary to the Kennebec, the Androscoggin and the Connecticut; and he knew men and timber. A notable slave-driver, nevertheless he would walk into saloons in Berlin, New Hampshire, or Sherbrooke, Quebec, and impress a sizeable crew of drunk and fighting *habitants* to go with him to drive the Nulhegan, one of the most dangerous streams for cant-dog men in the North country. Without pencil or paper he would cruise casually through forty acres of mixed fir and spruce, and come out with an accurate estimate of the eventual log scale of both species.

With an axe handle or sawed-off peavey he often faced a rebellious crew and offered to kill, not to lick, them all; but he knew he had only to break a few skulls to quell the mutiny. He never cut wages until he was forced to by higher-ups; and on at least one occasion he purposely misunderstood orders from the head office to make a ten per cent slice on a certain November 1st, and did not put the pay reduction into effect. Men got scarce later that season, and many camps went shorthanded, but Jigger's crew was complete and happy. His only explanation of his foresight was that he had read in *Ayer's Almanac* "where it says we was goin' to have a shortage of choppers this-a-year." All his references to the almanac, of course, were satirical. He never looked inside one and was sure that anyone who did was haywire.

JIGGER JONES was christened Albert at the time of his birth in Maine, in the early 1870's, but few knew him as anything but The Jigger, a name whose origin has been lost in the imperfect history of woodsmen. And it seemed to all young loggers that there had never been a time, no matter how remote, when one hadn't heard of Jigger Jones and his doings. His life and works had been so mighty that he existed part real, part myth, from the 'eighties until violent death did him in near a White Mountain village in 1935.

He was a small man, standing not more than five-feet-six, and he weighed around one-hundred-and-forty pounds. He was strong. In his middle years he would pick up a drum of gasolene from the ground and slap it into the back of a tote-team body. He was actually as quick as a cat. These two gifts contributed considerably to his life span, but they were useless in the face of the machine age.

After one term in a district school, Jigger went directly to work in a logging camp, as cookee or cook's helper, at the tender age of twelve. But Jigger wasn't tender at twelve; he was rugged.

Conversation among the crew at mealtime was strictly forbidden. One night some new men, carrying noble hang-overs, heaved into camp just in time for supper. One of them insisted on talking loudly at table. Jigger, dutiful, told him to shut up. The fellow, twice young Jigger's size, swung off the seat, struck the boy, and floored him. Then he jumped on Jigger and began pounding him. Jigger hugged the big drunk close, set his keen young teeth into an ear, and hung on. When some of the crew pried the pair apart, a good hunk of the ear remained in Jigger's mouth. Between two men of equal age and size this incident would have created no more than polite interest; but the youth and grit of the young cookee made it something special. So in honour of the occasion the crew passed the hat and bought Jigger a fine new red woollen shirt to replace the one torn in the scrap, and a full pound of B. & L. Black, a favourite chewing tobacco of the time.

Jigger soon graduated from the cookhouse. Having used an axe since he could walk, he did not require the usual preparatory courses of swamping out roads, knotting felled trees, but hired out as a chopper. In those days saws were not used for felling timber and axemen took great pride in the smoothness of the scarf of their undercut. Jigger's was like a planed board. He learned to fell a spruce or pine so that, in falling, it would drive a stake previously set in the ground. In no time at all he was a head-chopper.

Jigger had not thought, probably, of learning the business and of working upward and onward, but due rather to his restlessness he next became what was known as a hair-pounder, or teamster. He liked the excitement of sliding down ice-hard roads, standing upright on the long logs, and yelling bloody hell at his four horses. But he didn't like the bother of putting on the bridle chains which were placed around the sled runners to act as a brake on the steep hills. On one frosty morning on Swift Diamond Stream, he took a hill with a big load and no bridle chains. The load was too great for the team. With sparks of fire flashing from their hoofs and the devilish yelling of Jigger in their ears, the frightened animals tried to keep ahead of the sled, but could not. The weight and momentum of the monstrous load rushed them off the glaring road and into the timber, where the logs piled on top of them, and on top of Jigger, like great jackstraws. Three of the horses were dead, a fourth had a broken leg and so had Jigger. Jigger killed the injured animal with a pole axe. In the language of the woods he had sluiced his team.

Sluicing a team is likely to hang over a logger for a long time. Its shadow, indeed, is something akin to that cast in other circles by the failure to touch second base in a World's Series. But Jigger lived it down. By the time he was twenty years old he was put in charge of a camp on the Androscoggin River.

OLD-TIMERS have told that Jigger's first season as a camp push was something to go down in the annals. He was the smallest man in camp, and of course, in those days, he had to fight and lick half a dozen "able" men before he got his feet on solid ground. He did this with neatness and a fine show of imagination. Although he denied its truth in later years, tradition has it that he hit one of the tough lads over the head with a peavey and then rolled the body into the river as though it had been a log. "That story is a goddam 'zaggeration," Jigger protested.

In any case, he had been in a heap of fights. On the rare occasions when he made any pretence at bathing, I was impressed by the deep marks of "loggers' smallpox" all over his chest, shoulders, and stomach—the work of many steel-calked boots stamped there by opponents. That his face was entirely free from such marks was attributed to the fear in which men held Jigger's teeth. "When I got holt on a feller's ankle," he recounted with relish, "I chawed clean through boot, hide, an' all."

Yet there wasn't an ounce of venom in his soul. In a tribe of traditionally generous men, he was outstanding. Literally, he would give the red woollen shirt off his back to the first friend or the first no-good bum who came along. He considered it ethically indefensible for any man to leave for camp, from town, until he had spent his last dollar, lost his hat, and awakened with his coat pleated from sleeping against a radiator in some river-front hotel. And when Jigger wanted to go to town, he never used the standard excuse of loggers—"I want to get my teeth fixed." Jigger said: "I'm going down to get fixed up."

One of Jigger's greatest contributions to the logging industry was the virile and amusing profanity he always had on tap. He could and did damn a person or a thing in a manner that made the Pope's excommunication sound like a recommendation of character. But he never used—at least in his more mature years—vulgar and shopworn phrases like "blue-eyed, bandy-legged, jumped-up ol' whistlin' Jesus H. Mackinaw Christ." Such ejaculations, he held, were sacrilegious. Unfortunately, because of its phallic and other anatomical references, little of his bluest and best billingsgate can be reproduced. Much of it was interesting in that it connected various biblical characters, of whose history he knew little, with references to things known to all woodsmen.

One of the worst things he could call a man embodied an allusion to the *pediculis pubis*, with which he claimed the patient Job had been afflicted. Of a logger who was notably unkempt, Jigger said that he was "dirtier than the combined britches of Matthew, Mark, Lute (sic) and John." Of another logger he would say, with just a trace of envy, that he was a "bigger picaroon man than ol' King Solomon himself."

He might term a very lazy man "a reg'lar Joel's jilpoke." If he wished to indicate that something or other was very broad he would say that it was broader than a certain part of the anatomy of Amos. Diligent search of the Bible leaves these connections obscure, and it was probably Jigger's love of alliteration that brought them into being.

In the realm of alcohol Jigger stood alone. His drinking abilities passed all belief, unless one had seen them displayed over a period of

(*Continued on next page*)

Roaring Timber (*Columbia*)

years. He actually drank everything from clear grain alcohol to canned heat, and from horse liniment to painkiller; that is, everything except champagne and cocktails, both of which he held to be injurious to the stomach and kidneys.

Speaking of Jigger's stomach, I shall never forget the March morning in 1920 when I left Jigger's camp. The thermometer was down "two feet below zero" that morning. Jigger, sleeping in a bunk across from mine, sat up on the edge of the bed in his bright vermilion underwear. He reached under his bunk and came up with a crock of Graves' Pure Grain Alcohol. He poured a draught into a tin dipper and drank it neat. Then, barefoot and in his underwear, he strolled down to the brook through the deep snow, cut the ice in the pond, and brought a pail of water back to the shack. He remarked that it was middling coolish. While pulling on his pants and showpacks he worked on half a cut of B. & L., squirting the juice on to the sizzling stove—to kill the germs in the air, he always said. In a few minutes he took another shot of the grog. Then, just before the gut-hammer's *clong clong* broke through the cold silent darkness outside, he pawed again under the bunk and this time brought forth a bottle of milk of magnesia.

"I guess I better take a dose of this," he said. "You know, I got to be powerful careful of my stomach. . . . It ain't very strong."

JIGGER JONES would have lived to be a hundred years old, probably much older, had he been allowed to remain deep in the logging woods where he belonged. Whole trees had crashed upon him; he had fallen forty-five feet off a dam at First Connecticut Lake; a team of logs had run him down; large men had jumped on his chest with calked boots; and for more than half a century he had lived in snow all winter, in icy water all spring, on the drive—but neither exposure nor accident seemed to have the least effect on him. It was only when circumstances forced him out of the logging camps, and into the ways of civilisation, that he took the first step toward the grave.

When the New England pulpwood industry went bad in the 1920's, the ageing Jigger found camp foremen's jobs scarce, and he went to work for the United States Forest Service. They put him atop Mount Chocorua, in New Hampshire, as a fire lookout, and later moved him to the summit of Carter Dome, highest fire tower in north-eastern United States. Jigger could spot fires. He made a dandy lookout—alert, competent, and conscientious—just as long as there was actual fire hazard in the woods. But when rains had soaked the forest and even a city slicker would have known there could be no forest fires, Jigger took to seeing bats, winged eels, and other phenomena familiar to able drinking men, even in high altitudes. Much as the Forest Service liked the Jigger, they had to let him go.

Presently, and after a brief toot in town, Jigger became a sort of watchdog for a bloated capitalist who had a summer house and large shooting preserve in northern New England. During the dangerous dry months it was again Jigger's duty to sit in a lookout shack, this time atop a bald peak whose sides were so sheer as to discourage most mountain-climbers. How, in the name of God, he ever managed to tote material to the very top of this dome and there set up a small but practical still must be left to the imagination. But he did exactly that, and for weeks, until it blew up in a blaze of glory and fired the lookout cabin itself, the only smoke visible for miles around was that from what Jigger was pleased to call Jones's Tin-plated, Triple-Worm, Little Giant Still. The product of this still, which Jigger boasted was the highest in all America, was said to have made men breathe easily at four thousand feet altitude. Jigger called it Eagle Sweat.

FOLLOWING detection of this contrivance and his subsequent discharge from the capitalist's *ménage*, Jigger took a job as foreman at a CCC camp. This was undoubtedly the beginning of the end. He took to riding about, on occasion, in an automobile, and there was also the effect that life in a CCC camp must have had on his *morale*. City guys had ever been anathema to Jigger, and in his eyes all CCC boys were such; yet he set out manfully to make real woodsmen of them. But he couldn't fire anybody, as of yore. He couldn't even curse anybody, much less whale some sense into them with a peavey handle. And "professors" came to camp to lecture the boys about the evils of gonococci, which Jigger held could be laid low and harmless by immediate applications of strong tobacco juice, as witness his own excellent health and pure reproductive ability at close to seventy years.

And there were rules about shaving and bathing and clothing and the hell and all. Not that Jigger paid any attention to any such rules, but it bothered him to know they existed, even in theory. Perhaps the study periods bothered him most, although he never attended them. What did it profit a man, he would ask, to know that a fir was an *Abies balsamea*, if he didn't know on which side of a tree the moss grew? "And a skunk ain't no bottle of Floridy water, even if you calls him by one of them fancy Polark names," he said. (By "Polark," i.e. *Polish*, Jigger designated any foreign language, either dead or living.)

It was all pretty discouraging to one who had spit Spearhead into the eyes of mean French Canadians and had bitten ears off gigantic Blue Nosers from New Brunswick. Although the CCC boys, and their officers, too, learned to like The Jigger immensely and to have deep respect for his lore of the woods, Jigger's mind often turned back to the great days when, as boss of a hundred wild riverhogs, he had chased the logs from headwaters at Connecticut Lake down to Holyoke, Massachusetts, and on at least two occasions, when the log booms had broken, right down to salt water at Saybrook, on Long Island Sound.

When this melancholia fastened upon him, Jigger would, in spite of all the CCC officers could do, get off the reservation and go to town, any town, where he could "get something for" his stomach, an organ that must have been made of nothing less than boiler plate.

It was then that the pseudo-sophisticated

younger generation of the White Mountain area were struck dumb and startled before the Vastness of a he-man's binge. When he rolled out the strophes to "The Redlight Saloon," the Great Stone Face in Franconia Notch was seen to tremble slightly, it was reported, and the few moose left in New Hampshire charged, bellowing in fear, over the state line into Maine.

It was a sort of swan song, one of Jigger's last great efforts to howl down the civilisation that was catching up, hemming him in. Men who heard The Jigger on these latter benders said his cry was like that of a trapped animal —fierce, wild, and defiant, yet with a ring of fear at the bottom. So, when the CCC regretfully let Jigger go, the end was not far off; but the end was not as it should have been. Folk had long said of Jigger that he would surely go to his death by being trampled under the claws of purple pachyderms, while a six-legged boa-constrictor caressed his neck —fauna he had often met with in his years of serious drinking. Others had predicted, for years on end, that he would finally tumble off some mountain cliff high enough to bust him up proper. None could have guessed that death would call for The Jigger in a conveyance he wholeheartedly loathed—an automobile.

Released by the CCC, Jigger had taken to trapping, an art he had practised off and on since boyhood. He did very well with wildcat and lynx, that last winter of his life, bringing several of the clawing devils alive into town. He could get more for them alive from zoos than their fur would bring. Then came that cold day in February of 1935.

Starting out over his line, Jigger found a lynx in the first trap. He killed it. And then a mighty thirst struck him. Instead of continuing on over the trap line, as he knew he should have done, he hurried back to the village where he could claim the lynx bounty. Immediately he got the money he bought a quart of drinking liquor, then another, treating everybody in town who would drink.

After two days of this Jigger suddenly awoke to the fact that he had not visited his traps in forty-eight hours, a gross violation of a law that had been getting considerable attention from game-wardens. This wouldn't do, for Jigger had often felt the heavy hands of the wardens in times past.

So, in what he must have known to be a weak moment, he engaged a driver and what he contemptuously referred to as a "horseless carriage" to carry him to a point where he could take off on snowshoes near his trap line. Hitting along on all four, the car slithered off the icy road and crashed into a telephone pole.

The country doc to whom they brought the dying Jigger could hardly believe that a mere automobile accident could lay low such an indestructible fellow as he had known The Jigger to be. True enough, his skull was broken in two places: he had concussion; and his arms, legs, shoulders, and ribs were smashed. Still, in the past, Jigger had taken such things in his stride.

But it wasn't a mere accident. It was something much larger than that. It was the last round in a one-sided battle between all civilisation and one unadulterated savage of the species lumberjack. And it was a churlish fate that removed him in such manner, even though he had his boots on, the old timber beast who could run faster, spit farther, jump higher, and belch louder than any ory-eyed so-and-so north of Boston. All the old-time loggers at the funeral, during which Jigger wore socks, remarked that it was one hell of a way for The Jigger to get sluiced.

Valley of the Giants (*Warners*)

(*Courtesy High Commissioner for Canada*)

'Holy Old Mackinaw'—a Natural History of the American Lumberjack, published by the MacMillan Company of New York.

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THE DIRECTORIAL TOUCH

Some of Hollywood's ace directors—those who shout and those who don't—described by EZRA GOODMAN

Michael Curtiz directing Errol Flynn in "The Adventures of Robin Hood" (First National)

ROUGHLY speaking, there are two types of directors in Hollywood—those who raise their voices, and those who don't. Many of them do, for various reasons. They may be profoundly displeased with either the cameraman, the grips, juicers, script, acting, the unnecessary noise on the set, the stupid extras, the shooting schedule, the stand-ins, the studio policy or the general Hollywood set-up. Or they may be pleased with everything and merely let off steam as a matter of course.

Those who don't raise their voices are either so competent and efficient that they can afford to indicate their point of view in little more than a whisper. Or, perhaps, they are waiting for their option to be picked up by the front office and are, therefore, no longer in a position to assume the world.

Let us take a fan magazine tour of the various studios with an eye peeled not for Myrna Loy or Ginger Rogers but for the impresarios who put them through their paces. This may be a little tough on those who are on the lookout for the Misses Loy and Rogers, but it should be a great deal more educational.

At this point, it is just as well to scotch, once and for all, the rumour that Hollywood directors go about attired like forest rangers in boots, breeches and horsehair shirts. On the contrary, they usually wear sandals of Mexican derivation, fancy slacks styled in the Broadway fashion, loud polo shirts, wrist watches to note periodically the unprecedented passage of time during which nothing whatsoever has been accomplished, and sometimes either caps or sunglasses to protect their eyes from the klieg lights and the actions of the Thespians beneath.

It is also well to add here, before we approach the gist of our discussion, that the directorial vocabulary is confined to a few choice expressions. Most of these are so choice that it is impossible to reprint them here. The others include such favourites as "QUIET!", "ACTION!", "Fine, boys, fine—but let's do that scene just once more", "Cut!", "Beautiful, darling, beautiful", "That smells bad", and "Print that one".

One of the most colourful of Hollywood directors is the talented and straightforward Archie Mayo, creator of such films as *Black Legion*, *The Petrified Forest* and *It's Love I'm After*. At the moment, Mayo is directing a comedy, starring Andrea Leeds, at Universal. He goes into long psychological discussions with Miss Leeds in order to lay bare the motivation of each of her actions and lines, and acts out the dialogue himself. Thickset, with a bellowing voice and an ability to swear like a fireman, Mayo dominates the entire company. He even tells Rudolph Mate, one of the world's finest cameramen, how to handle his instrument, and refers to him as "you painter with lights." He calls everybody on the set "Honey", "Sweetheart", or "Darling". Mayo puts on a good show, but his basic purpose is to put everyone at ease and get good results.

A BIRD of another feather is George Cukor, director of *Camille* and *David Copperfield*, who is now doing *Zaza* with Claudette Colbert at Paramount. Mild-mannered and

wearing glasses, Cukor looks more like a college professor than a motion-picture director. He prefaces his order with "Please", "Ladies and Gentlemen", "Thank You" and other expressions rarely heard in Hollywood. Periodically, he turns to Nazimova who has been hired as technical advisor for the production, in order to get her point of view. All this, however, is also a pose. Cukor has a firm grip on the proceedings and knows precisely what he wants. Everyone on the set is currently occupied in shooting a short scene in which Claudette Colbert exchanges a few lines of dialogue with Bert Lahr and Helen Westley. One "take" follows another. Once Miss Colbert miffs her line, then Lahr, then the camera goes wrong, and finally an airplane flies over the sound stage. As soon as a "take" is completed, no matter how poor it has been, Cukor enthusiastically says "Excellent—print that one—now let's shoot just one more." The scene has to be done eleven times before Cukor is satisfied.

At Twentieth Century-Fox, Gregory Ratoff, who has a three-way contract with the studio as actor, writer and director, is doing an oriental melodrama starring Alice Faye and Warner Baxter. Ratoff, who has a Russian accent that can be sliced with a kitchen knife, is the volatile type. He hops about, gesticulates violently, spouts phrases and gets all excited. The picture has been in production a few weeks and many of the Chinese extras on the set are already talking with a Russian accent. After a great deal of rehearsal and aggravation, they are finally shooting a scene, but one of the Chinese extras, Wang by name, misses his cue. "You s— of a b—!", shouts Ratoff, and at the same time rushes over to the little Oriental, who is petrified with fear, kisses him violently on the cheek and exclaims: "You know, Wang, I wouldn't insult you for the world, you know that, don't you?" It takes a few minutes for the spectators to calm down after this.

William Keighley, directing *Brother Rat*, with Wayne Morris, at Warners, is one of Hollywood's slickest directors. He works quickly, efficiently and handles everyone with kid gloves. Keighley, looking for all the world like a visiting diplomat, never raises his voice, even when it seems that everything is going wrong, and the entire company seems to be enjoying making the picture. Nevertheless, despite the carefree mood prevailing, there is exactly the same attention to detail as on the Cukor or Mayo sets. There are sometimes as many as ten "takes" to a scene, but everything is accomplished with the most gracious and polite manner.

AMONG the Hollywood firecrackers list William (Wild Bill) Wellman, who is doing *Men With Wings*, an aviation saga at Paramount. Wellman, who can outcuss anyone on the lot, is a mass of energy. Tall, tousle-haired and almost brutally frank, nothing is sacred to him. On the spur of the moment, he grabs the script girl and kisses her. Wellman is having the time of his life on this picture since his primary interests are Technicolor and aviation (he is a former war pilot and directed *Wings* ten years ago). *Men With Wings* combines both of his interests. Wellman's pictures move at a rip-roaring tempo and he always keeps the action humming. It was he who had James Cagney dunk Mae Clarke's nose in a grapefruit in *The Public Enemy* and Fredric March knock out Carole Lombard in *Nothing Sacred*.

A typical Wellman fable, apocryphal perhaps, is told by Robert Carson, his scenarist who worked with him on *A Star is Born* and other pictures. It seems that a fire broke out one day in the studio just around the corner from Wellman's office and the fire force turned out in full regalia for the event. As the engines drove into the lot past his office, Wellman leaned out of the window and screamed frantically: "Help! Fire! Help!" at the very same time that various frenzied studio employees were attempting to direct the firefighters to the proper destination. The firemen finally got to the flames, but not until Wellman had had his bit of fun.

At Warners, Anatole Litvak, recently imported from France where he did *Mayerling*, is handling the production of *The Sisters*, with Bette Davis and Errol Flynn. Litvak is one of the most fastidious directors in Hollywood where attention to detail is the rule rather than the exception. The scene being photographed will last only a few seconds on the screen and show some soldiers rushing up two flights of stairs. The set itself has been in construction for two days, while the camera set-up has taken from morning till late afternoon to complete. A truck with a long crane has been backed into the sound stage and the camera and the operative cameraman are perched at the end of the boom somewhere near the roof of the stage. Litvak and Tony Gaudio, the chief cameraman, are standing on a tall platform observing the action. The scene is rehearsed time and again, the soldiers running up the stairs and the camera crane following them. Litvak, bushy-haired and speaking with a marked accent, makes many fine corrections in the action. It takes two full hours before this slight scene is recorded by the camera.

At the same studio is Michael Curtiz, of Hungary, who is currently supervising one of the year's most promising films, *Angels with Dirty Faces*, starring James Cagney, Pat O'Brien and the "Dead End" Kids. Curtiz is a consistently successful director, specializing in the action genre. He has done such films as *Captain Blood*, *Kid Galahad* and *Robin Hood*. The studio publicity department has been building up Curtiz as competition for Samuel Goldwyn and attributing all kinds of spurious Malapropisms to him. Curtiz, however, is a serious worker. He understands how to approach a scene both for camera and dialogue. The "Dead End" Kids, who are practical jokesters, keep getting in Curtiz's hair, and he is forced to take a poke at them every once in a while. Curtiz is one of the few directors in Hollywood whom the "Dead End" Kids respect, since he is more than six feet tall, was a former strong man in a circus, and has a powerful build. He directs his pictures without fanfare, speaking with a strong accent, and giving the unmistakable impression, as do most of Hollywood's directors, of knowing what he wants and exactly how he wants to get it.

George Cukor (*M.G.M.*)

William Wellman (*United Artists*)

Archie Mayo (seated left) (*Warners*)

OIL Beneath the BOUGH

Top: At work in a Textile Factory. Centre: A Domestic Science Class. Bottom: An Iranian Industrial Worker.

The story behind John Taylor's Film 'The Dawn of Iran' told for SEE by Alexander Shaw

A book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness
O, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Somehow I don't think that Omar Khayyam would have approved of the excellent film *Dawn of Iran*. For it shows a Persia from which the roses and the hyacinths and the wine have vanished; a country where only the Loaf of Bread remains and Omar's hedonistic eye would not have recognised the dreams and hopes with which that loaf of bread is leavened.

It must have been difficult to make such an honest film about a country of which the very name conjures up a host of romantic, ready-made ideas. Persia—where jewelled warriors rode horses which were swifter than the fleet gazelles, where soft-voiced houris gathered round the gently splashing fountains, where bright birds flashed among the heavy perfumed flowers. Were these things fact or fiction, history or the details of some Persian miniature?

Dawn of Iran shows a Persia stripped of all this fabled colour. Of Omar Khayyam's poem only the story of how "Sultan after Sultan, with his pomp, abides his destined hour" remains.

The film opens with a ceremony. His Imperial Majesty Shah Reza Pahlavi is to open the Northern section of Iran's first railway. The crows are gathered; the Royal Family are on the platform; the engine steams magnificently into the station. All is efficiency and everything is of the most modern. But, as if in final salute to the past, the ceremony includes one echo of the old pomp—the last bolt screwed in the railway line by the Royal hand, is made of gold.

Having firmly established the fact that this is a film of the new Iran and not of outmoded Persia, the camera takes us back into history with a sequence which is most satisfactory and

Persia of the Romantics has become Iran, where the Shepherds become factory hands, the women learn to cook scientifically, and the children learn the methods of the western world.

successful. Camera, commentary and music have combined to tell, in very few feet, the tale of triumph and disaster that is the story of Persia. The camera sweeps across a barren countryside on to the ruins of Persepolis and, as it closes in to show details of carvings and low-reliefs on tumbled temples and on battered walls, the deep voice of Darius, the Archaeminian, booms out:—

I am Darius, the great King, the King of Kings, King of lands peopled by all races.

The effect of the voice and of the beautifully shot details of pillar and low relief is strangely moving and disconcerting. It is as though history itself were speaking; the blood just dry on the marble, the sword just sheathed in the silver scabbard.

The studios, with their thousand actors and million-dollar sets, never made history as vivid as does this sequence.

And now the strange story of the Iran of to-day starts.

SEVENTEEN years ago. The great Empire had been broken up, the mighty cities were in ruins. Persia had become a land of poverty and oppression. Her people were scattered and without a leader. For them the past had ceased to be glorious and the future was without hope. Leaderless, they roamed the countryside in nomadic bands, tending their flocks in burning desert or on frozen plain, scattered remnants of a once great people.

But there was magic in the soil of Persia: a thick, black substance oozed from the sides of the hills in the South. Strange ragged figures with flaming torches scoop the substance from the surface of the puddles. A European fires a flare from the side of a hill and a pillar of flame, as if at some magician's command, bursts from the valley, signalling the discovery of oil.

The universal adoption of the internal combustion engine was to enable Persia to build up a new glory. The people of the West needed fuel for their machines and Persia had that fuel in vast quantities.

The discovery of oil and the appearance on the scene of Rheza Khan made Iran possible. The former brought wealth to the country and Rheza Khan knew how to control that wealth for his people's good.

Omar Khayyam would have found it difficult to have continued his musings on the pleasant futility of human effort with the clatter of modern Iran in his ears. The Rumble of the Distant Drum has become a very noisy actuality. The East's Swift Hunter would to-day be more likely to noose an electric pylon than a Sultan's turret; the Scattered Petals of the Tasselled Rose would fall into the cement mixer.

Hands, used only to the plough, have quickly accustomed themselves to the rivetter; legs, used to walking the plains, have learned to grip the soaring girders. Concrete and steel replace marble and mosaic. There are factories and post offices to be built; railways to open up the country; bridges and roads to cross the mountains.

Here the film inevitably takes on the appearance of a Soviet epic. Roads are built in a couple of shots—deserts reclaimed in a sequence; crops improved with a cut; and agriculture mechanized in a dissolve. Progress appears almost too easy. The film Iran is built in less than a day.

Towering behind this renaissance are the shining and fantastic shapes of the oil wells; pumping their liquid power through mile after mile of pipe line to the refineries at Abadan. Bringing back from the West money for the Treasury, money to educate a nation and build a new country.

"My children, I advise you to show your attachment to your country by industry and work". The words of Reza Pahlavi are carried across the serious and intent faces of young Iran at work in field and factory.

"You, my sisters and daughters, to-day have become members of society". The emancipated women of Iran are told that it is their duty to train sound and strong citizens.

And back among the people of Iran the film again becomes real and moving. The boys in the classroom, the girls at play and the voice of their leader advising and encouraging them. With sympathy and understanding, the camera records their activities; shows on their faces their hopes and fears.

Wisely the film leaves the future alone, although the march past of the mechanised army suggests disquieting possibilities. We have seen this grim display too often on the newsreels to find in it only the outward expression of a new nation's natural pride. The tanks and aeroplanes cast dark shadows of the future before them. For the oil which made Iran possible was a double-headed gift. The civilised world is dependent on oil and Abadan is to-day as politically important as Gibraltar, the Suez Canal or Singapore.

But the spectator may possibly be able to comfort himself if he turns again to Omar Khayyam.

Ah, my beloved, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and Future Fears:
To-morrow!—Why, to-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

Dawn of Iran is a memorable film. John Taylor has done brilliant work with the camera, and if we shall soon forget the steel and concrete Iran of the present, we shall remember for a long time his re-creation of the splendours of the past and the promise for the future of their country, which is implicit in the quiet, determined faces of the young Iranians of to-day.

"Sheer adrenal intelligence and pugnaciousness."

IN THE GLAND MANNER

We don't want to make trouble for anyone, but we think every Hollywood producer should know about this ultra-scientific method of choosing actors and actresses explained by Mary Elwyn.

RUSSELL FERGUSON says typing is an old story. He's right—Claud Bernard started it all sixty years ago. Of course, he had never seen big film executives glowering behind fat cigars, pouring adrenalin into their blood-stream in a way that is simply terrific —and he'd never seen Stymie Beard, Tom Mix's Tony or Shirley Temple, if it comes to that. Well, perhaps typing is an old story, but maybe it would be better if it was a lot older and Claud Bernard had given it a start along the glandular way before Sam Goldwyn ever heard of celluloid.

Assuming that you don't know a thing about ductless glands here's just enough to help you become an amateur endocrinologist and a casting director in your own right.

Romance? What do you expect of an age when love lies dreaming at the bottom of a test tube?

This glandular cocktail we all possess determines not only our physical type but our mental and emotional one. There are roughly eight of them in our bodies. As their name implies they send their secretions directly into the blood in the form of hormones which vary in quantity according to the body's needs.

Come down the throat to the thyroid. Just a fraction of this secretion marks the balance between the idiot and the normal being. Look at those grand, highly-coloured advertisements in *Esquire* of girls drawn by any male and they'll probably be the hyperthyroid type. All those who are "Pawed by a Pudgy Wudgy" show flambuoyant hyperthyroidism. Mae West is the outstanding creator of this type on the screen. They have beautiful bodies, brilliant eyes, and are flatteringly susceptible to males.

Given a slight thyroid balance women become sex-charmers *par excellence*. First in this category is Bette Davis, a thyroid type if there ever was one, and the most intelligent and diverse actress of the screen. After her their names are legion: Carole Lombard, Loretta Young, Constance Bennett, Miriam Hopkins, Joan Blondell, Alice Faye—and once in a verree refined way, Sweetheart Pickford.

Male thyroidites cover many a screen with their brilliantined waves, the Nelson Eddys, Gene Raymonds, Dick Powells. Is it possible that in the case of Bing Crosby a toupee covers the spot where once waved fair hair that would put him among the thyroid boys? He has the charm, ease and eyes that point that way.

Dark women have, as a rule, an adrenal compensation. Stalin and Mussolini have thyroid eyes coupled with the kinky hair of the adrenal type.

The pituitary is formed of two lobes an inch or more from the back of the nose, and was called by the seventeenth-century anatomists "the little brain". After some practice you'll probably be able to recognise this type from among the hirsute or bladder-of-lard faces of your friends. As a rule the pituitarist has evenly-spaced teeth, wide-apart eyes, thick eyebrows and hairy legs. George Robey bears out the eye-brow theory and he probably hides a satyr's leg beneath his suitings.

It is very romantic to read how Norsemen became berserk, fought like giants and did not bleed in battle. But it was a nasty business and not the saga it sounds. Actually they suffered from abnormal pituitary development brought on by a diet of salt fish and total lack of vitamins during the long, dark Northern winters. They developed a disease called acromegaly, ending in homicidal mania, grew hairy, wolfish muzzles and were dreaded as werewolves.

Sideshows are full of abnormal pituitary development. Giants, dwarfs, fat women are

"A slight thyroid balance makes women sex-charmers par excellence."

all its victims and are fortunately proud of their abnormalities.

Grant Allen said an Englishman's idea of God was an Englishman twelve feet high—pituitary might produce such a god but he'd be very dull—twice as tall and twice as dull —Grant Allen forbid!

Little is known of the parathyroids, neighbours of the thyroids, except that they control the supply of lime to the body.

Ancients called the pineal, situated at the back of the skull, "the seat of the soul". Christ and Paul were pure pineal. So too was Joan of Arc with her illusions, her childish boasting, her splendid bravery:

"I said 'go ye boldly against the English—' and I went myself." Remember Leslie Howard in *Petrified Forest* and in *Berkeley Square*?

Down the map a little the thymus gland is found in the chest. It normally ceases functioning about adolescence. Peter Pan is the supreme type of continued thymus functioning—only in real life he would probably have been a criminal of the worst type. Prisons are filled with thymo-centrics with fine hair, baby faces and records for brutality. A child with an abnormal thymus has a strong thread of mental and physical cruelty, a part played perfectly by Bonita Granville in *These Three*.

Even directors can type Billie Burke correctly, with her childlike face and her ability to act the woman whose thymus has become active in middle life, disturbing the proper functioning of the thyroid, dispensing a terrible, fluttering energy and sugar-coating her selfishness.

The romantic glands are not near the heart as one might suppose, but above the kidneys. They are called the suprarenals and give out adrenalin. These people usually have kinky hair, are ambitious and quick tempered. These are the fighting glands of the male and are sensitive to emotion. Adrenalin runs in the blood stream of warriors.

WHAT is it that makes the athlete? Co-ordination of muscle, speed and timing, and the adrenal-centred have it. When Perry plays tennis he is a gunman with a racket in his hand, savage, explosive, relentless. Watch Tarzan Glenn Morris, swordsman Flynn or swimmer Weissmuller, and you'll see what it is.

That Hemingway of the screen, Spencer Tracy, takes adrenal honours; he is intelligent, tender, savage and *ordinary* in a way no other actor can equal. In his wake follow Muni, Gable, Cagney, Robinson and Arnold, and, with a dash of thyroidal charm, William Powell and Melvyn Douglas.

Of the women Claudette Colbert leads for natural beauty and grace: she seems to have everything, but most women of this type have imperfections to conquer and do so through sheer adrenal intelligence and pugnaciousness. In this class is Shearer, an adrenal Antoinette against the thyroidal one of history. Barbara Stanwyck is another, and Flora Robson, and that loveliest, most charming woman who has everything except good ankles, Myrna Loy.

There are others too, ambitious, beautiful or both, of great courage and brilliance who have "ate the bread of gods," Rosita Forbes, Greer Garson, and in the recent past, Amelia Erhardt. They are the most interesting types in the world, the creators of history and the remembered in art.

With perfect glandular compensation you get a superbly balanced loveliness in women, but not the interest, excitement, and "edge" of women not so evenly balanced. Madeleine Carroll is probably one of the loveliest women —but can she enthral you as Bette Davis can: Bette who is so much less beautiful?

There are exceptions. Garbo appears to have glandular balance. She has an enchantment without parallel, an adult strength and tenderness, a meticulous precision of art that shines through the tragic veil that is always about human perfection and is the real meaning of the misused word "glamour".

This balance seems to have no effect upon charm in men. Robert Donat springs to mind as the perfect type, a man who has charm and a delicate wit that is beyond most. At a guess Bernard Shaw has perfect endocrine balance. His staying powers may be due to vegetarianism, woollen underwear or well-balanced glands: my bet is on the glands. Both his literary and his newsreel antics are performed so very much in the gland manner.

It was probably only Charles Laughton's printed word when he likened his face to an elephant's behind that prevented his being cast as Monsieur Beaucaire—although he'd make a pretty good job of it if he were.

You couldn't find a more horrible piece of miscasting than putting the adrenalin-type Irene Dunne to exercising the joy of living, in the thyroidal parts she has been gurgling through recently. Nor is it possible to look back without a shudder to the time when sensitive, pineal-type Leslie Howard bounced through the horrors of *Stand In*.

Boris Karloff, whose *macabre* line must always suggest at least a screen-shrivelled pituitary, put Cambridge cadences into the mouth of a thymo-centric gangster in that otherwise fine film *Scarface*.

Probably Lionel, that homespun, wise and everlasting Barrymore, and that "high falutin lovin' man" Rasputin, had not one honest-to-god gland in common.

Director's dreams may be pretty things, but a little study of who is glandularly who, and capable of taking a chosen part would be a help to an audience, which, after all, has some rights. Types chosen for the big historical epics seem to prove it will be a long time before directors will out-cast the Almighty.

Stymie Beard? Who knows, that little mulberry face keeps its secret. Maybe some day—another epic.

"Hannibal . . . Hannibal
Bangin' through the Alps,
Licked the proud Romans
Ran home with their scalps—"

Spanky McFarland, Rin Tin Tin, tigers and Tommy Kelly? Of course they're stars—they don't give a darn if their right gland knows what their left gland is doing *now*—but in ten years—leaving out the tigers and Rin Tin—when their glands have done their worst, will you pick them then, or will they in their turn be saying "hey you" to thyroidal hot-dog sellers and pituitary window-cleaners?

GREAT HEIL TO HEALTH

(*Olympische Spiele*)

WHEN a film has been almost two years in the cutting-room it should at least arouse curiosity. But when, in addition, it is the best sports picture that has ever been made, and an airy statement of the Nazi religion, it becomes even important. This film, *Olympia*, is Leni Riefenstahl's Version of the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin. It is a very self-conscious film and a very long one, the two parts together lasting almost four hours. No one, I suppose, but the hardiest Teutons would see both parts on the same evening.

Probably the most remarkable thing about the film is that it is never tiresome over this long period of time. The shooting and the cutting have been beautifully done. Ordinary events such as the hammer-throw are actually made exciting. The agony of the cross-country runners is caught with painful realism. The amount of suspense that is drawn out of such a thing as military riding is truly remarkable. You can be sure of one thing in connection with this picture; you won't be bored by it.

If it were necessary to select parts of the film which stand out from the others I should be inclined to select, for photographic excellence, the diving and the pole-vaulting which have been done almost entirely in slow-motion. The pole-vaulting is taken at sunset when there is no sun but just a lot of grey and black clouds behind the cross-bars. The familiar almosts and overs seem much more important in this setting. And when white pants go into a black cloud in slow-motion you ought to be impressed.

The diving of course is a natural. The newsreel boys discovered that long ago. The attractiveness of this sequence depends as much on the angles as on the slow-motion. At this point the film goes in for a little trick stuff, with stop and reverse motion. These intrusions are somewhat annoying but they don't really spoil the sequence. Those who made the film must have shot every conceiv-

Prize winner at the Venice Festival, Leni Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 Olympic Games has yet to be shown in this country. Nods and winks to the effect that the prize was awarded on political grounds are not borne out by reviewers who accord hearty praise to the film.

In a special criticism of the film written for SEE an American critic expresses some unease at the fanatical nature of Nazi sport worship, and wonders if we shall yet see the day when the defeat of a German football team will precipitate an international crisis.

★ ★ ★

able angle on the divers, except one they might possibly have got by letting one of the cameramen ride a diver. One camera gets the divers bouncing in the air and another, under water, gets them when they hit the surface. The diving is used for the finale of events and a forceful one it makes.

Since the Germans have never established any great reputations as being willing occupants of back seats, it is rather surprising that no attempt is made in the film to minimise the victories of other countries and to maximise those of Germany. But, after all, it is rather difficult to minimise Jesse Owens. Since it was quite impossible to present Germany as the most successful of the nations participating in the games, an alternative had to be chosen. It was the next best thing to Germany—muscles.

From the propaganda point of view, which is one of the most important to be considered in connection with this picture, muscles were only a short distance behind Germany in desirability as a victor. The value of this film as propaganda lies not in the effect it will have on the world outside Germany, but its importance lies in the effect it will have on the German people. This of course is true of practically all their propaganda. (If they are really spending money trying to sell themselves to the rest of the world they are surely getting gypped and ought to change their advertising agency.)

THE message which this film has for the German people is that old one of body-love. It builds up a four-hour shining picture of thousands of young men and women bursting with health and strength and it keeps asking the little man in the tenth row; "Wouldn't you like to be doing these things, and why aren't you doing these things?" The picture shows the acclaim which is showered upon those of high physical achievement. It tries to furnish the hardy Germans with an incentive for making themselves hardier.

It is a pity that no statistics are available to show the increase in chest expansion among the German population since the release of this picture, but it must be considerable. Using films like this seems to be almost the ideal way of conditioning your population for carrying bigger guns. It is certainly much more effective than supplying them all with white sweaters.

It would probably be easier to excuse the Nazis if they saw in this picture only an opportunity to make their people better soldiers. But when they close the film with hosannas to the new religion of the muscle, it seems just too difficult to accept. There is an inkling of this in the very pretentious beginning of the film when the camera wanders through the cold, tumbled temples of the Greek deities. Youth and muscle finally arise from these ruins having heard the cry from the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936. The long-extinguished torch is re-lighted and carried by runners from Greece to Germany.

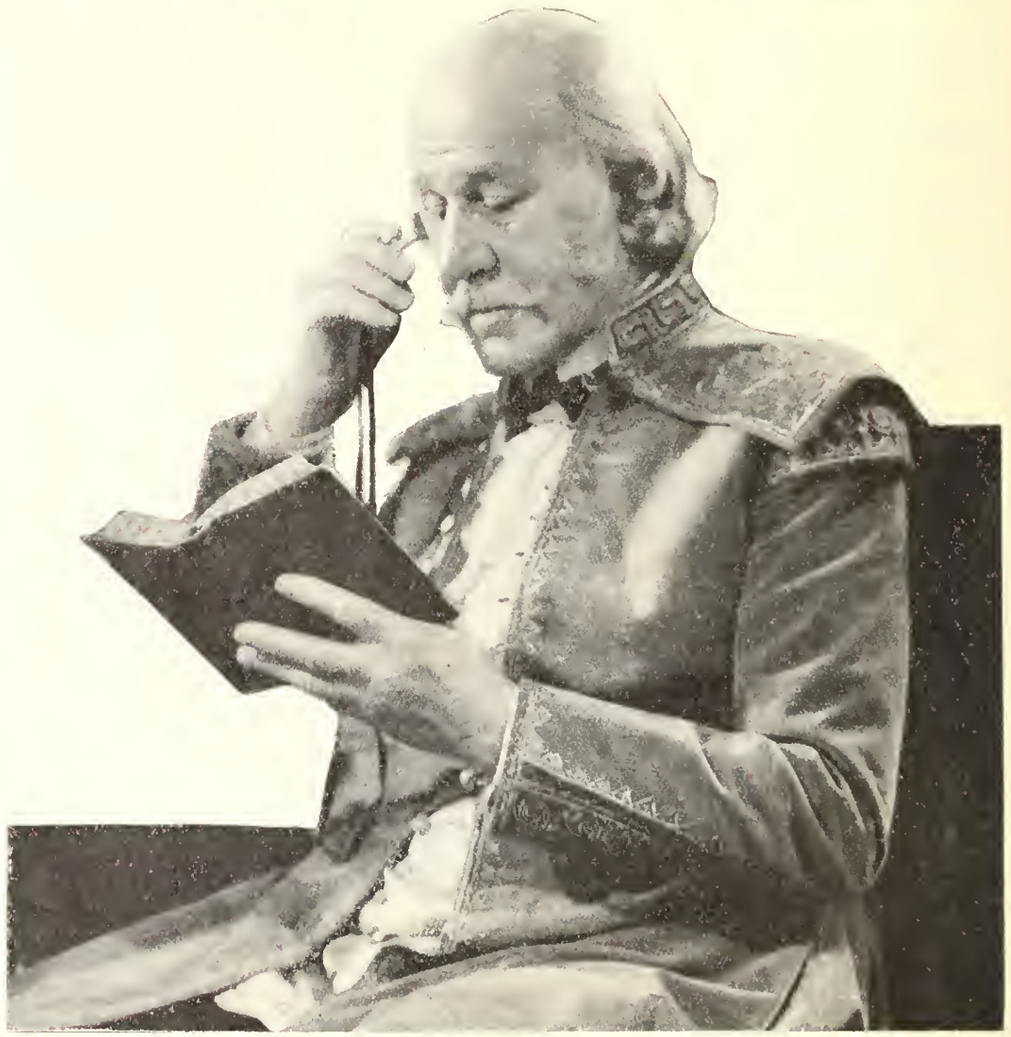
Right from this beginning the film takes itself very seriously. The expressions on the athletes' faces alternate between glumness and grimness. Almost the only one the camera allows to smile is the Fuhrer who appears from time to time beaming benevolently on the contestants, except the black boys.

The pay-off of the film is when, with majestic vagueness, shafts of light rise from the battleground of the Olympic stadium into the heavens, meeting there in a blaze of light to the accompaniment of a seraphic choir and a celestial symphony of at least three hundred pieces. It is difficult to tell whether one is just supposed to be bewildered by this or merely to decide that he is witnessing what someone thought was a "fitting conclusion" for this Nazi religious spectacle.

Whichever the case, it is somewhat disturbing to see people getting metaphysical about a relay race, and it is interesting to speculate as to what will result from this muscular pantheism. If it gives us another sports film as good as *Olympia*, fine; but if each loss by a German football team precipitates an international crisis, things don't look so good.

Stills from "Olympische Spiele."

BRUCE at BOMBCUTTA



Plymouth Hoe

Criticism: A magnificent spectacle: should do well in the suburbs and provinces.

The story: Queen Elizabeth (Edna May Oliver) is in love with Francis Drake (Gary Cooper) who prefers her maid of honour (Olivia de Havilland). She is a very proud queen, so the young people have to keep their love a secret. But the Earl of Leicester (Basil Rathbone) has ambitions to marry the Queen, and tells her of Gary's love for Olivia. The Queen banishes Gary in anger, and he sails round the world capturing Spanish galleons. Olivia is sent to the Tower.

Meanwhile the Earl of Leicester presses his suit with Edna May Oliver, but makes little progress. She finally spurns him, and he begins to intrigue with the King of Spain (Akim Tamiroff), asking him to send an Armada and conquer Elizabeth.

Meanwhile Gary returns with a load of treasure, and the Queen knights him, but she will not forgive Olivia. After the knighting ceremony there is a great feast on Plymouth Hoe, and one of Shakespeare's comedies is performed. Gary, thinking of Olivia, cannot join in the merriment. He steals away for a game of bowls with the common sailors.

Meanwhile the Earl of Leicester has sent word to Spain that now is the time to sail up the Channel, while Drake's men are all dancing or playing bowls. The Spanish fleet is in charge of Henry Stephenson (The Duke of Medina Sidonia). The signals for attack are locked in his flagship.

Meanwhile the English sailors have gathered round Plymouth Hoe to watch the game. The Spaniards are sighted, but Drake insists on playing the full twenty-one ends, though the Armada gets nearer and nearer.

Drake wins the game. As night falls, he rows out to the Spanish flagship and gains admission by means of a trick. He steals the signals for attack out of the safe in Henry Stephenson's cabin. The Spanish fleet is now powerless to move. Fireships are sent among them.

In the morning there is a great battle, and the English win easily. Henry Stephenson dies gallantly.

After the battle there is a showdown. Edna May Oliver asks Drake what reward he wants for saving England. He asks for Olivia de Havilland. Gary and Olivia are married, and Basil Rathbone's head is cut off.

Bannockburn

Criticism: A magnificent spectacle: should do well in the suburbs and provinces.

The story: Robert Bruce (Gary Cooper) loves Olivia de Havilland, daughter of the High Steward of Scotland, but she refuses to marry him until he has delivered Scotland from the yoke of the English king, Edward I, Hammer of the Scots (C. Aubrey Smith). Bruce sets about the task, but is betrayed to the English time after time by John Balliol (Basil Rathbone). In reward for this assistance, the English king makes Basil king of Scotland, and Bruce is banished from the country with a price on his head. He goes to Rathlin Island in disguise.

Meanwhile, the Scots are preparing to rise in rebellion against Basil Rathbone, who is a tyrant, while Basil is trying to get Olivia de Havilland to marry him, in order to consolidate his position. But Olivia still has faith in Bruce, and delays giving him an answer.

Meanwhile, Bruce is lying in a cave on Rathlin Island, watching a spider trying to build a web. Six times the thread breaks, and six times the spider tries again. That's funny, says Gary, I have been betrayed in six battles. I wonder if the spider will try again? The spider succeeds at the seventh attempt, and Bruce determines to come back to Scotland and try again to beat the English.

Meanwhile, C. Aubrey Smith dies, on his way to Scotland to put down the Scottish rebels.

Meanwhile, Gary lands in Ayrshire, and begins to rally the Scots to his banner. He captures castle after castle, until the only castle the English have left is Stirling Castle. He draws up his forces at Bannockburn and prepares for a great battle.

Meanwhile, Edward II (Henry Stephenson) has arrived in Scotland with a huge army to relieve Stirling Castle.

The night before the battle, while the English are feasting and the Scots are singing *Scots Wha Hae*, Bruce penetrates the English lines, gaining admission by means of a trick. He puts spikes in the ground in front of the English cavalry.

In the morning, when the English cavalry tries to charge, the horses all stick on the

No other movie magazine can equal SEE'S film review service. Always two jumps ahead of even the best informed critics we here present reviews of films not yet made. RUSSELL FERGUSON tells you about five historical epics, yet to be made by Hollywood, each one a colossal production.

spikes, and are powerless to move. There is a great battle which the Scots win easily. Henry Stephenson dies gallantly.

After the battle there is a showdown. Gary and Olivia are married, and Basil Rathbone's head is cut off.

The Black Hole of Calcutta

Criticism: A magnificent spectacle: should do well in the suburbs and provinces.

The story: Robert Clive (Gary Cooper) is in love with Olivia de Havilland, daughter of the Governor of Calcutta. Imagine his feelings when he discovers that Suraj-ud-Dowlah (Basil Rathbone) has thrown her into a dungeon with 145 others.

Clive rescues Olivia and prepares to march against Basil at Plassey.

The night before the battle, he penetrates the native lines, gaining admission by means of a trick. He breaks off points of the sharp sticks used by the elephants' jockeys.

In the morning, the elephants are powerless to move. There is a great battle, which the English win easily. Henry Stephenson dies gallantly.

After the battle, there is a showdown. Gary and Olivia are married, and Basil Rathbone's head is cut off.

The Relief of Lucknow

Criticism: A magnificent spectacle: should do well in the suburbs and provinces.

The story: Sir Colin Campbell (Gary Cooper) is in love with Jessie Macdonald (Olivia de Havilland). Imagine his feelings when he discovers that she has been besieged in Lucknow by mutinous natives led by Basil Rathbone.

The night before the battle, Gary penetrates the native lines, gaining admission by means of a trick. He greases the natives' cartridges with cow's fat.

Meanwhile, Jessie dreams that he is coming to her. In the morning, the bagpipes of Gary's highlanders are heard in the distance.

Meanwhile, the native rebels have thrown down their rifles and are powerless.

There is a great battle, which the English win easily. Henry Stephenson dies gallantly.

After the battle, there is a showdown. Gary and Olivia are married, and Basil Rathbone's head is cut off.

The Fall of Rome

Criticism: A magnificent spectacle: should do well in the suburbs and provinces.

The story: After the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, there is a showdown. Gary and Olivia are married, and Basil Rathbone's head is cut off.

Flash Reviews

Conquest of Mexico, Scramble for Africa, Battle of Waterloo, Retreat from Mons, Fall of Sevastopol, Advance on the Rhine, Heights of Abraham, Gladstone.

Savonarola, Perkin Warbeck, Bismarck, Bradman, John Knox.

Humboldt, The Hundred Days, The Great Plains, The Thin Red Line, Last of the Tribunes, Victoria Falls, Martyrdom of Man, World Civilisation.

Criticism: Magnificent spectacles: should do well in the suburbs and provinces.

The story: There is a showdown. Gary and Olivia are married, and Basil Rathbone's head is cut off.

(cont. from next column)

Real comic draughtsmanship is rare. It must not merely illustrate a joke; it must be immediate, extravagant, and satirical in itself. Such elements Shell has discovered in Messrs. Bawden, Robb and Constanduros, and let loose on a delighted world.

I hope the public is properly grateful to the managers of Shell-Mex and B.P. They have acted on the belief that the best will always be appreciated. This is a prodigious act of faith, and if it turns out to be justifiable we shall all feel more confident about the future of art in this country.

ART and the POSTER

by Sir Kenneth Clark
Director of the National Gallery

For the past seven or eight years, Shell-Mex and B.P. have been among the best patrons of modern art. They are all that a patron should be—they employ young or little-known artists, they provide definite subjects, and they make it possible for an artist's work to be enjoyed by a very large number of people. The art of private patronage has long been dead, and state patronage where it exists is out of touch with public feeling: for we do not really want to see our buildings decorated with the rows of solemn muscular men which monumental painting is supposed to demand. We want the gaiety, the variety, the ingenuity, which Shell posters nearly always supply. The patronage of Shell is truly democratic. Every kind of artist is employed, and allowed perfect freedom to interpret a given subject as he likes; and in justification of this democratic principle the unknown artists have, on the whole, been more successful than their well-known colleagues. Two of the best posters in the last Exhibition, the "Great Globe at Swanage" and the "Wolves at Whipsnade", introduced me to painters whose work I have since come to value very highly. No doubt visitors to the present Exhibition will make similar discoveries.

Shell-Mex posters prove a point recently neglected—the importance of the subject; and in this I think that the recent series of landscapes to illustrate Britain's landmarks has been rather less successful than those which preceded it. The artist was faced with the problem whether to paint a straightforward picture of the scene, or to attempt artificially to transform it into a poster. The ingenuity with which Mr. McKnight Kauffer has solved this problem is the proof of its difficulty. Personally I believe that between an ordinary picture, however well reproduced, and a poster, there is an essential difference. The poster should leave an image in the mind, and to be memorable an image must have some element of strangeness; and for this reason Mr. Graham Sutherland's "Brimham Rock" seems to me the most successful of the Britain's Landmarks series.

The group of Conchophilous Trades, on the other hand, provided the artist with an ideal subject. It allowed great freedom of invention, the accumulation of decorative motives, and the use of allegory—that priceless, forgotten ingredient in all the arts. Mr. Nash, who has done designs in both series, seems to prove my point with his beautiful "Footballers Prefer Shell," in which no footballers appear.

This is perhaps the most rarefied region in which the poster can still breathe; for ultimately its life must depend on the breath of popular opinion. But if anyone complains that Shell posters are sometimes too serious, let him turn to the drawings on the tab[illegible]

(cont. at foot of previous column)

HUMAN QUALITY

THERE are many places in London where a Scots pound is only good for nineteen shillings and sixpence. England waters down even the money. The pure malt is always a native brew, for native consumption; you cannot carry it far at full strength. So it is with profound shock that Americans discover a hitherto unsuspected potency in Scotch whisky when they meet it on its home ground. The further from the still the weaker the brew.

It is the same with Scots Comedians. There is an angelic company who cannot even make the front streets of Glasgow and Edinburgh. They are the home brew, the pure root. They are in the age-old Scots tradition of local satire, incomprehensible two blocks from their cradle. Bring them to London and they flop or must water down to tepid tastelessness; in which case they also flop.

This has been the lot of so many Scots comedians that Will Fyffe sets an exceptional puzzle for the critic. Why has he gone so far? Why has he gone further than any of the others in films? Sitting in his dressing-room adding grey to his hair and lines to his face, he tried to explain.

"I don't remember when I wasn't acting. I was born into a theatrical family for my father ran a penny geggie—not really a penny

★ ★ ★

A talk with Will Fyffe by Thomas Baird

★ ★

one but threepence and sixpence—and I played there in my early teens. Now the penny geggie—you would call it a booth—wasn't a music hall. Drama was the thing. None of your red-nosed, bandy-legged, curly sticked Scots comics. We were actors and we did a different play every night. We travelled about and fitted up for seasons—sometimes the season was one night, sometimes one month and quite often three or four months. We did everything—Shakespeare included. I was Polonius at 15 and later Hamlet. I learned the Welsh Gaelic so that we could do a long season in Wales. Everything was grist to our mill in those days and I played straight drama for twenty years.

"I learned first to be an actor, the music hall came later. They tell me that Chaplin wants to play Napoleon and that Grock wants to play Hamlet, but they cannot because they are clowns. Well, I got all the heavy stuff out of my system when I was a youth. Then I went on the music halls. But not as a Scots comic. I went as an actor and developed the characters such as the Highland Doctor, the Glasgow Drunk and the Scots Engineer. These characters grew straight out of the old straight drama. Cameos, you might call them. I picked the kind of folk I knew and built up the characters bit by bit, a gag now and another one then. They were built inside the theatre and they are theatrical characters, but they are tinged with memories of people I have met and have seen.

"There's another reason why I play such parts. I told you I played Polonius when I was 15. I found that I could make up as an old man and I realised that if I put on whiskers and played old men, I could go on doing them until I was 90. The parts would always be older than me—and if that is not thrift, it's foresight. You see, comedians have to change with the times, but a character actor, playing the kind of parts I do, can go on for generations and can play the parts anywhere. The songs don't date, the fundamental types don't change. There will always be Scots Engineers and Glasgow Drunks in spite of Swing and Coca Cola.

"THE kind of part I have been playing on the films is not really anything new to me. Its just going back a little closer to the beginning and developing the straight part. McNab was more than just a comic character and the shepherd in *Owd Bob* was even a more dramatic part. And the next part I do for the screen will call for more straight acting and less of the music hall technique. I am going to play McAdam in the colour version of *The Blue Lagoon.*

"But don't think I am trying to make a great big difference between the music hall, the cinema and the theatre. For me, at least, they all offer an opportunity to develop the kind of part in which I am interested. In them all my concern is to build up characters and always these are the kind of ordinary people you will find all over the world—real everyday folk with a sense of humour and maybe a bit of sentiment. I am Scots and I play them as Scots, because they are the people I know best. I don't go for a purely realistic treatment. I don't go and watch sailors and engineers and shepherds and sit with a note book getting finnicky details. Music hall, theatre and film are wider than that. It's the human quality that counts—the canniness, the kindliness, the braveries, the humour, the big hopes and the small fears. The lines, the gestures, the pause and the flick of the eye are nothing in themselves, they are just the expression of human qualities that don't change from generation to generation."

And maybe that is why Will Fyffe has seen a bigger world than some of his compatriots. Satire is domestic; wit, based on topicality, is local; but humour and the warmth of life flies further.

Fyffe in his recent film success "Owd Bob".

BOUND VOLUMES

of

WORLD FILM NEWS

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MOVIE MONUMENT

All reference books are said to be indispensable. You have to work on a movie magazine for a while to know just how indispensable *The Motion Picture Almanac* is. The mariner might do without his compass, the B.B.C. without its chamber music, prom. concerts and string quartets, the casting director without his divan and get along a whole sight better than a movie magazine could without the *Almanac*.

For movie magazines are supposed to know more about movies than Einstein doesn't know about space and time. People don't write or ring to ask if Clark Gable is still alive, or how old he is: they are more likely to ask who is Wade Rubottom working for now? And we are supposed to know. The secret of our success in dealing with enquiries of this kind is—we might as well own up—*The Motion Picture Almanac*. There must be about 20,000 biographies in this year's edition, and our enquirers might pick on any of them. So we turn the pages of the *Almanac*, leaving the enquirer on the line just long enough to think we are turning it all up in the files. Stymie Beard's real name is Matthew Beard; Siegfried Rumann weighs 200 lbs.; Kyohiko Ushihara is a director and is married.

Besides biographies there is something like a ton of weighty knowledge here about films made, where they are made, who makes them and how much they cost. We have only one squawk. The names of the great ones of the past are not included. To name a few stars of the silent screen: Bill Hart, Pearl White, Rudolph Valentino, Wallace Reid. Such names should be included in the biographies. We can't all have the *Almanacs* since the beginning, and the films and film people of the past should be included. One other observation: this *Almanac* seems bigger than last year's, which in turn was bigger than that the year before. All this piling up of records, of data, of new and old things in the film world, needs assessing each year: needs perhaps a summary of achievement and a pointer to the future.

And while Mr. Terry Ramsaye, who edits this monument, is thinking that over, let me make one suggestion to the Government of the United States. Britain crowns her kings over the old stone of Scone. Let all American presidents in future be sworn in on a stand built entirely of past and present issues of *The Motion Picture Almanac*.

All the grateful movie magazine editors in the world would gladly kick in for such a fitting act of homage.

The Editor—SEE

In presenting Britain on the Screen we should show

DEMOCRACY in its WORKING CLOTHES

urges John Grierson, discussing the kind of films Britain should send to the New York World's Fair

With the great nations blaring their messages across space the quieter aspects of international address do not seem very urgent. Shall we worry about the pictures we show at next year's New York World's Fair when, who knows, it may take a flotilla of destroyers to escort them there? Yet, wandering over the States and Canada recently, I got the impression that these pictures we are building up to send overseas may be just as important as the noisy interventions from Godesberg and elsewhere. People were asking, everywhere, where Britain stood in the present war of ideas, and they expected, I am afraid, a very concrete answer.

One felt that ultimate alliances depended upon that answer. Talk propaganda projection, dramatising yourself, bringing yourself alive to others as much as you please, you come back inevitably to the fact that alliances are living things based, not on fleeting impressions of might, or fleeting appeals to ancient sentiment, but on a lively and day-to-day sense of common purposes and co-operation in effecting them.

Using the word democracy a great deal in our international stand, it has become inevitably the binding principle for the United States and the Empire countries, and the framework within which our picture is expected. Unfortunately, we in Britain take the notion too much for granted. It is, in our common speech, more of an academic concept than a fighting principle by which we measure the every-day achievements of society and of our personal citizenship. It is a very different matter in America. There, under Roosevelt, and as a result of the national reorientation since 1930, they are riding on a wave of active democratic consciousness and inordinately busy with social reconstruction and the relating of the personal self to problems of public service. When Britain appears in its international role as a pillar of democracy, the picture they expect from here is a somewhat detailed picture of just those personal freedoms and social goods which the pillar upholds.

We have, of course, a great deal to tell about our contribution to constructive democracy for we have as fine a record in matters of housing and health, education and the public welfare as any country. If we do not tell it, it is because we are, as a nation, still very diffident about appearing in our working clothes. In that diffidence one may see, per-

haps, the effect of generations of Empire building and the influence of that caste system which one might expect in so old and solid a country. But it is nonetheless a factor which embarrasses and even prevents true cultural relations with our fellow democracies overseas. We present our pageantry, show off our Navy, make play with the institution of Royalty and they are, of course, powerful and valuable symbols of solidity likely to impress young peoples. But the young peoples by this time have made their own romance, and, coming out of a new industrial and socially conscious age, the measure of achievement and national pride is more likely to be in the rehabilitation of Mississippi Valleys and the health departments of the cities. "What world are we building?" is, significantly, the guiding theme of the World's Fair.

Hard as it may be to doff our ambassadorial dress and show ourselves as we really are, it is expected of us. As we put the notion of democracy to the national mast-head we oblige ourselves to give the world the first real and intimate sight of Britain the world has ever had.

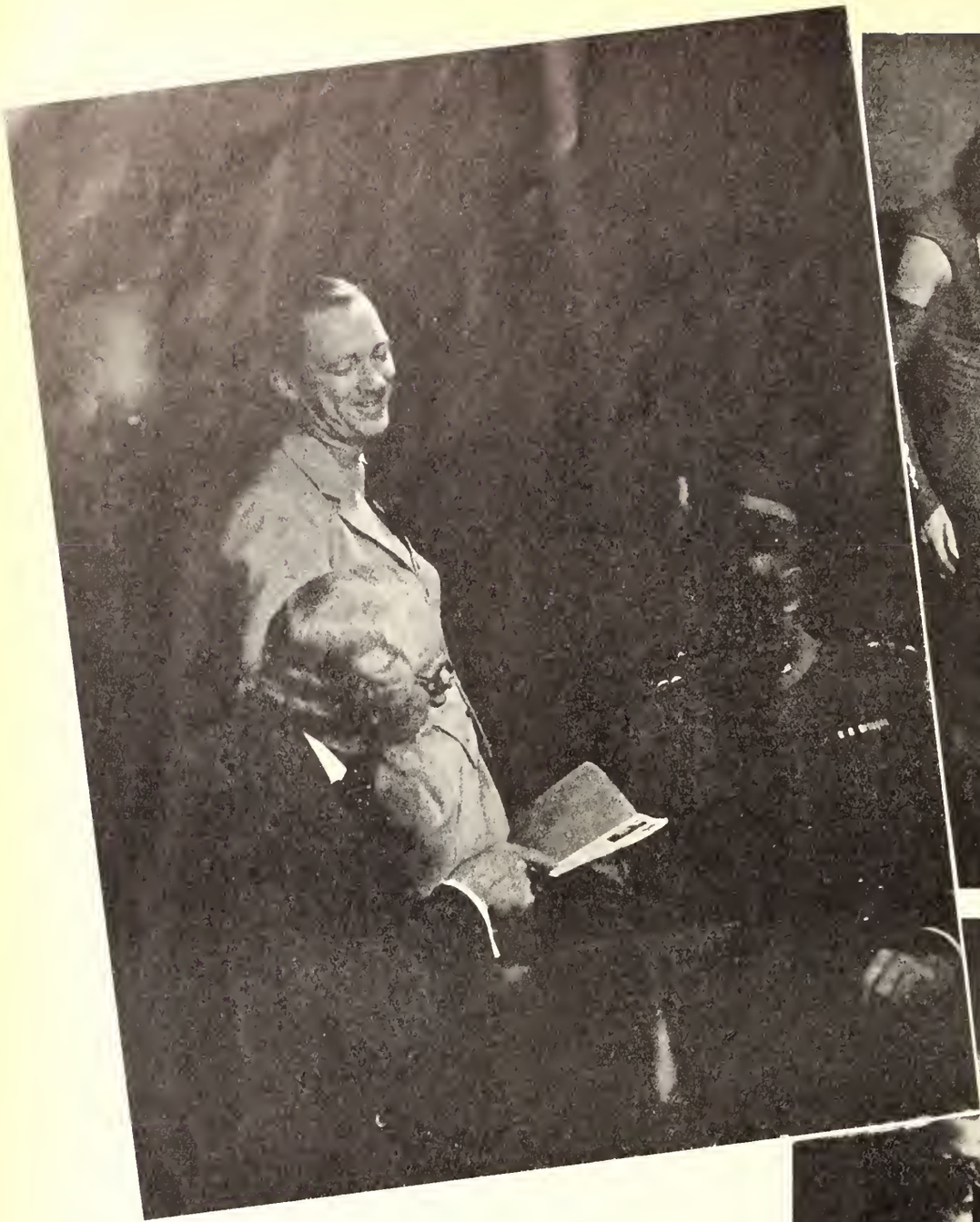
Some of us have been laying a plan by which effect can be given to this idea in New York next year. We hope, of course, that there will be exhibitions to the general public in which Britain's most dramatic feature films and short films will be shown, but the hub of our idea is that we should show to each section of the American community what Britain is doing in regard to their particular interest. The American Government Departments will see what we are doing in national health, agricultural communications, vocational guidance of the younger generation, or, say, in economic replanning of Scotland. The people interested in child welfare will see what we are doing with our movements for re-housing, re-schooling, nutrition and physical fitness. The town planners and the smoke abaters will find that we, too, are doing good work with our slum problem and that behind the scattered housing estates of the country is a first-rate record of imaginative reconstruction. The method of approach is thus capable of interesting intimately an infinite number of audiences each on its own pet subject, and it provides at the same time a range of material as wide as the national life itself.

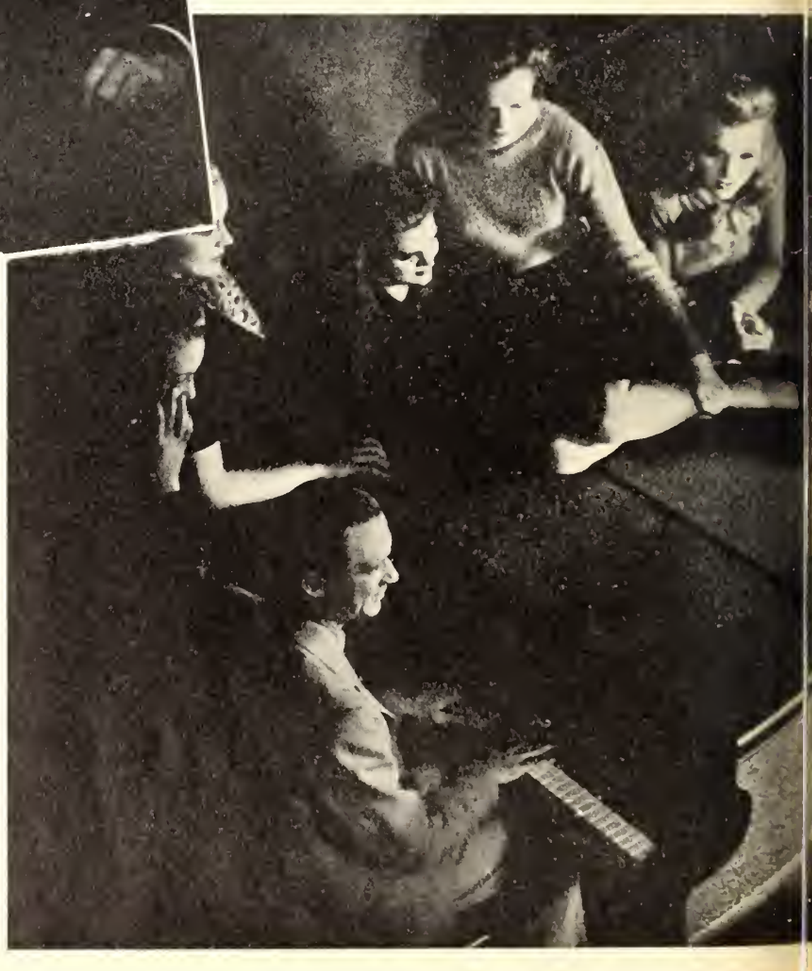
Pictures from "B.B.C.," "The Voice of Britain," "The Face of Britain," and G.P.O. films

CURIOUSLY enough, on that test, Britain is richer in films to-day than any country in the world, not excepting America. When it comes to a record of how we live and work, paradoxically it is this country which is so afraid of showing itself in its working clothes that has the materials of display ready. This is where the years of work of the E.M.B., the G.P.O., the Ministry of Labour, the Scottish Office, the far-seeing public relations departments of industries like gas and oil, and the pioneering work of film groups like G.B.I., Strand, Realist and others, come at last into focus. We have good films of communications, housing, health, child welfare and the teaching of citizenship, and Scotland, particularly has a fine picture to present of democracy in action. Conversely, we have few or none of the films which might have been expected from old ceremonial England. We have not one decent film on pageantry; our only film of the Navy was thrown together casually the other day from bits and pieces gathered from half-a-dozen sources; our only real film of the Crown is, the now exhausted news-reel account of the Coronation.

Many have deplored this poverty of films showing Britain's grandeur, but presently I think we shall be blessing the fact that Britain's infinite capacity for being illogical will again have given the right answer at the right time. A few holes need certainly to be filled up before the event. In films of agriculture, particularly agricultural research, we are almost criminally weak. We have nothing first-rate to show of our railway transport except *Night Mail*, though the story of our railway transport, and particularly of the London Underground, would be vastly interesting in America. We are weak in records of medical research and of those achievements in science which have international validity. We have not a single film describing our capacities in ship building. For the women of America we badly need a film on the work of the women's institutes and for the youth of America an account of how the new freedom of youth has been expressed on this side of the Atlantic.

No doubt some of the people concerned will be inspired to make up the deficiency before the World's Fair opens, and someone will have to be assigned to the work of inspiration. It should be easy, for these industries and national groups will have the satisfaction of doing something for themselves in that their pictures will help them to define their own relations to the community. They will do something to fill out the picture of Britain, and therefore do something for their country. Valuably, at a time like this, they will be helping to articulate the constructive democracy we are now so anxious to save for the world. I like to think, too, that after the Fair is over, the educational film collection for British children will be the richer for this special effort. After all, it is there that the ultimate importance lies.





HOT POTATO

An article about LEE TRACY which introduces a brilliant new writer, Robert S. Blees, to SEE. Stills by the author.

It was Osgood Perkins, in *The Front Page*, who yelled to the police, "Get Hildy Johnson! The son of a bitch stole my watch!" and thereby made three or four reputations at one crack. He made his own, those of Messrs. Hecht and MacArthur, who had written [the play between beers, and that of a would-be magician named Lee Tracy, who was, and still is to many and sundry, the aforementioned Mr. J.

Currently Mr. Tracy is another well-meaning dope named Harry Van in the turn-'em-away *Idiot's Delight*, which is nice work, too, but there are still a lot of people who won't be satisfied until Hollywood opens its arms once more and admits, "Lee, we love you." And lets him flutter his hands, whine an incredulous "Wha-aa-aat?" every thousand feet, and wrap a camel's-hair coat around his body in a way that is the despair of every fashion editor in the country.

Manhattan's West 40's and 50's remember Tracy as the boy who made the leisure lassies wonder if those nasty reporters didn't have possibilities after all. Hollywood can't picture Tracy as anything but a newspaperman, either, since he starred in *Blessed Event* and forever after made "fast-talking" and "Lee Tracy" as close as this in the publicity releases shot out from the Coast. After *Viva Villa*, to be sure, Hollywood couldn't picture Tracy as anything at all, because he got his name in the papers and his person in a Mexican jail, two facts which may be jake when single, but 100% T.N.T. to the movie biz when in conjunction.

So for too-many-years now, Tracy has been the uncomplaining victim of a nice, dignified boycott, and done little more than get married and fall in love with boats and sail out to Honolulu and cut up touches with a few friends—until Mr. Sherek had the most productive thought of the London summer and hired him to take over Massey's role in *Delight*.

After all, it is not like a Tracy, of the St. Louis, Missouri, Tracys, to kick about the way anybody treats him. Not when he has a boat he likes to sail in and a wife. Although the 62-foot contraption is a long ways down the pike for a lad who toured all the ten-twent'-thirt' houses in the U.S. for coffee-an' during those lean years, to coin a phrase, after the War. There were years of doing magic tricks, of all things, and years of vaudeville, good, bad and indifferent. And years in *The Bat* and *The Cat and the Canary* and every other spine-tickler on the boards. "Thrillers?" he'll ask you now. "Give me a scream and a skeleton and I'll run up a play that'll scare your pants off."

But Tracy finally got to New York, and in a little piece blatantly called *The Show-Off*, which was merely one of the ten best money-makers America has ever known, and which set Tracy up as a name to be reckoned with. Then, it seems, somebody sold Jed Harris an option on a play with the sweet title of *Broadway*. *Broadway* did right well, running two years or so, and all that time Lee Tracy was the star. (*Broadway*, incidentally, was That Thing the Laemmle family paid out a reputed $200,000 for and made into a movie that showed a night club to end all night clubs, with camera angles even Busby Berkeley wouldn't attempt if he were in a trance.) After *Broadway* came the tour-de-force of Charlie and Ben, the newspaper nit-wits, which gave Tracy the chance to be, then and there, the Platonic Idea of a Chicago inkslinger. And Tracy didn't muff it.

On the contrary, he jumped into it with both feet, he bit off chunk after chunk, and discovered that he was able to chew them all. The public *lo-oved* it. That Hollywood would immediately hasten bearers of good tidings was not unusual, nor was Mr. Tracy's first appearance in a pot-pourri called (with no intention to suggest any person, living or dead, or any play, especially one called *Broadway*) *Big Town*. *Big Town* was good, but Tracy was better, and he landed the Winchell part in *Blessed Event*. Just when newspapermen were *persona grata* on the screens of the nation, too, and when fancy business with the hands was considered the highest form of art. Not that Tracy's air massages are "business." They're not; they're Tracy, and the more there are the better I like it. But *Blessed Event*, not only a minor *succès d'estime*, was also a *succès de box-office*, and all was rosy for Lee, who, among other things, talked in the film for three minutes without a break.

So Warners liked him, and so Paramount liked him, and darned if that old star-hoarder, M-G-M, didn't like him, too, and finally sign little Lee up to a long-term contract. For them he did Sam and Bella (*Boy Meets Girl*) Spewack's *Clear All Wires*, with Benita Hume opposite. Things were better, and might now be even best, had not a casting joe decided Tracy was the answer to the newspaperman problem in *Viva Villa*. *Villa* called for a location trip to Mexico, where that incident began with Tracy and ended with a note from the Mexican government, shocked shrieks from the women's clubs of the U.S., abject horror from Hollywood producers, and a long vacation for the fall guy. Unfortunately, Mr. Tracy was it—the hot potato of the season.

Which could, of course, be another Hollywood Rise and Fall, but happily isn't. From London the new Harry Van's doings have seeped over to America, into the eyes and ears of the movie world, and even into the thoughts of a couple of those producers. Those shouts you're beginning to hear would be the London representatives of certain movie companies, who have discovered Lee all over again. But it's only Hildy Johnson, with a crack at a tap-dance instead of a typewriter, with a few more movements that are in the script and a few less that aren't. Still it's Hildy, they'll tell you, and it all adds up to something the public wants. So Warners, they say, like him now, and Paramount has been considering. He has, as it were, come back. Which is O.K. with this kid, homesick for a few more heroes with high opinions of themselves. Too long without Tracy is as bad as Fred without Ginger, and it's time stopped.

IN the name of GOODNESS

by John Grierson

Top right: A scene from Flaherty's "Man of Aran." *Above: "The Story of Louis Pasteur."*

Cinema in the service of religion crops up yet again. It is always cropping up. You might say it is one of these problems that are so happy cropping up that no one does anything about them. The one trouble about making the word flesh is that there is nothing left to blether about.

The churches obviously prefer blethering for they have been on this particular gambit as long as I remember. When we started talking of films in the service of education and citizenship they were already next rostrum to us on the Hyde Park Corner of film notions. The first film book written in England was written from the churches. I forget the name of the book but it was fat and pale blue and did say fifteen years ago everything the Film Institute and the morality councillors and the Payne Trust have been writing parish magazines about since. I remember with what tenderness the Reverend George Atkinson lent me his copy. I kept it and learned from it, for it was good stuff in that day and age.

The only consideration that makes it silly

now is that we who were talking simultaneously about films in the public service proceeded to do something about it. We found money somehow; we made films somehow; we built the documentary and educational film movements; we founded the Empire Library and other libraries; we grew a school of film makers; we made hundreds of films; we out-wrote, out-spoke, out-manœuvred our oppositions and drove our way to the screens of the country.

I say this impatiently and for good reason. In our struggle to vary the synthetic diet of the cinemas and find another depth or two in our bright and lovely art, I have, heaven forgive my innocence, expected a lot from the churches. They have the halls in thousands and the audiences in hundreds of thousands; people to talk to, waiting to be talked to with bright and lovely arts. They have, even if they have gone lazy and lost their sense of the privilege, a basic contact with the life of Britain. Back of them, is the commission to tell where the spirit gets off at, and speak of the deepest things that men may know. Just think of it from a film point of view. No fancifying, or doping with synthetics, or gearing the stuff down, but a full-blown commission with the church bells ringing and the choirs in full blast. And there isn't anyone, anywhere, but is waiting for the word that will vitalise, release, heroicise, and tell him where he gets off at. It is a terrific set-up, and when artists before now had the privilege of it they built cathedrals and painted pictures that are still the most inspiring things in civilisation.

But with so great an opportunity for patronage the churches are still blethering. They have plenty of money, have the easiest access in the country to plenty of money. They know that for lack of imagination or something or other they are failing in their job of inspiration. Their emptying churches tell them so; the increasing disrespect for the personnel of the church tells them so. But that commission of theirs is not thereby altered and how could it be? The deep things have still to be spoken in the name of religion, if men are not to go empty in their bellies. And here is an art that could speak them. It is not the only art, but it is the one that could speak them simply and widely and that is most important thing for religion. You would think that the job was easy and it is. They have only, at worst, to waste a million or two finding and building the people who will use the film to inspire people, and they waste that much now, and more aridly. Would the people of our bright and lovely art come through? There never has been a sponsorship of the cinema that asked for inspiration, and the art is panting for it. It would be a miracle releasing with a single blast every good power in medium and maker alike.

But here we had better stop dreaming. That is the logic of it but so far from the likely reality that we need not bother much. These good church people are inert and nearly only talkers and the little that they ever do is terrible. The Methodists take a wonderful story like Tolstoy's *Where Love is God is* and add the sludge of utter commonness to their interpretation. It was not the producers' fault. I know, because I attended uncomfortably on the script and saw them debauch the theme; and in front of them was a fine and beautiful script from Cavalcanti which kept the spirit of the thing, but was turned down. Ironically, it was the film men who tried to put beauty and spirit into the thing; it was the churchmen who talked synthetics and box office.

On that example there isn't a Wardour Street producer I wouldn't sooner trust near the springs of inspiration than some of the churchmen who have been fiddling about with films. If the religious conservatives—and I am one—say 'well, there are others who will see higher', I give you the latest utterance of the Hon. Eleanor Plumer in the *Church Times*. Miss Plumer is a great public servant and a good churchwoman and close enough to the film industry to speak of it with diffidence. But does she ask them to do the job of inspiration? Not on your life.

Listen: "The most satisfactory method is a committee working with the trade. The committee can decide what it wants, but the trade is the expert who knows what can and what cannot be filmed. A final scenario is chosen, shooting begins, and *all the while the committee keeps a close eye on the work*." Is that, do you think, the road to anywhere? Why it sounds like another damned panel of the Film Institute.

The mistake is a simple one and not only the mistake of thinking a group of matter-of-fact non-artists equals one feat of imagination. It is the mistake of thinking that the inspirational bit of the job will come from the church side and the technical bit from the artist. It is the old and common mistake of treating the artist as a chauffeur. You tell him where to go and he, knowing his motors, takes you. But the fun of the fallacy is that in asking for chauffeurs, you get them. Set so glibly on determining the road, your committee only arrives, as ever, at its own composite little nowhere.

To me Miss Plumer, good woman though she is, is just as hopeless as her predecessors. If the churches want the greatest service from this art, it is not just the cameras and the pictures that it wants, but the power that makes pictures light up and talk. That is the artist's power and no backseat driving is any equivalent. Unfortunately for the good people, the artist and the inspirer tends to come in strange guises, and how many churchmen would be likely to know him if they met him? He will not seem to profess very much faith; it is highly doubtful if he will appear in the wings of a Sunday school teacher; but the measure will not be on these lower parrotwise levels of the spirit. It will be in the deep profession of faith and the arduous act of service which are implicit in every work of art whatsoever. Your artist will not for a certainty take a theme like *Where Love is God is* and forget to put in the faith and the beauty that made Tolstoy great. Every commandment he may break, but not that.

Another thing. He will do his job with themes even less explicitly related to religion than the Tolstoy one. I do not know why it is that the church people, like the advertising people, should make so much of the brand mark on their product. They don't need to. Inspire people in those values on which religion properly insists and you do religion's job. Teach the fear of God, humility and loving one's neighbour as oneself and you do the church's teaching. But no. The church people go on insisting on the dumbly explicit. Hear Miss Plumer again. "We need the screening of the parables in modern dress, the Prodigal Son, The Sower, The Great Supper, the Marriage of the King's Son, the Good Samaritan. We should try to approximate the incidents in the parables to the incidents of modern life *so that they may drive their lesson home*. We want films of the parish church, how it was first built; what the different parts mean. There should be films of our cathedrals, films of the religious houses, films showing our great inheritance from the Fathers and the Saints". It sounds all very boring already.

I don't think that the churches will do much with films. They are still a long mile away from the right idea. You and I and the millions of others will take our *Good Earth* and *Pasteur* and *Man of Aran* and *Song of Ceylon* happily and know they are the real thing. We will curse the fact they are so few. We will curse the churches in particular for not making it possible to have more of them, though they have the commission from society to give us more. The film makers among us will see the deeper possibilities of an O. Henry story or a Tchekov or a play by Bridie or a fairy tale of Hans Andersen. We will know it is what the churches are really seeking but are too blind—almost too irreligious—to see. We will go on fighting our way through the commercial cinema and, occasionally, someone fantastically out of the argument like old Arthur Dent will permit some excited young director to add to the great exceptions. But the churches, you may be sure will not know anything of that long and bitter war to make films a medium of inspiration and do their work for them. They will know no more and help no more than they have done in the fight of the documentary people to do their social work for them. They will still be talking and, in the enthusiasm of their talking, the deed will be satisfied and be dead.

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WHY SIXTEEN?

Frankenstein (Universal)

CENSORSHIP AND THE ADOLESCENT

An authoritative examination of the Censorship problem specially written for SEE by Richard Ford.

It is generally admitted that certain types of film are undesirable for children. Exactly which types are undesirable is not always agreed; the opinions of psychologists and social bodies frequently differ on this point.

There are two ways—one positive and the other negative—by which children can be prevented from seeing what is undesirable (assuming for the moment that the interpretation of "undesirable" is not in dispute). There is the positive method—the provision of a sufficient supply of suitable films, which will so educate the taste of children that they will have no desire to see any others. This at present and for many years to come can only be a theoretical objective. There is no use postulating such a method if the results remain amid the clouds of pious hope and lofty intention. What can be done, and is being done, is the provision of special children's matinees at which a selection from the all-too-few suitable feature films are exhibited. The child himself is the stumbling-block; he will not pay to see the most uplifting film ever made if he thinks it is going to be boring.

In this country the negative method—the Censorship—has been in existence for many years, and, unlike the censorship in most other countries, it is not imposed by the State, but by the Film Industry itself. In 1912 the (then) Association of Kinematograph Manufacturers, the only important trade organisation at the time, set up the British Board of Film Censors. Under the impetus given by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, the Board became recognised as the proper authority to grant a Certificate, when in 1921 the Middlesex County Council inserted a clause in its cinema licences that no film might be shown unless it held a Certificate from the Board. That rule has now become universally accepted by all local authorities, who retain, and exercise their power to alter the Certificate on any ground they think proper. The local authority may

(*a*) grant a "U" Certificate to an "A" film (*Snow White*, for instance).

(*b*) grant permission to show a film which has been refused any Certificate by the Board.

(*c*) restrict films with "A" Certificates to persons over 16, and prohibit the entrance of all younger persons.

In 1922 the Home Office approved the conditions which had been formulated and issued a recommendation to all licensing authorities recommending their adoption. Since that time they have become known as the "Model Conditions", and are now imposed by practically every authority in the country. The question of the legality of these "Model Conditions" came before the High Courts in 1924, when it was unanimously decided that the conditions were *intra vires* and enforceable. (Lord Tyrrell. Broadcast reprinted in *The Listener*, 30th March, 1938.)

In the early 1930's there was an epidemic of local censorship, which altered large numbers of the Censor's decisions. At the present time, even occasional action on the part of a Local Authority arouses considerable publicity. The system of censorship is, in fact, firmly established, and is generally regarded with favour and even admiration by the film trade, the local authorities, social bodies, and the film-going public. The only class which thinks it ridiculous are the persons under 16, and the writer finds himself in some sympathy with their difficulties.

What are the actual regulations laid down? Here is the L.C.C. interpretation—a standard opinion. (L.C.C. Rules of Management, 1938):

1. No film shall be exhibited unless—
   (*a*) it has been passed by the British Board of Film Censors as suitable for exhibition as a "U", "A", or "H" film, or
   (*b*) it has received special permission to be exhibited from the Council.

   This rule does not apply to newsreels, which are outside the scope of the censorship.
2. If the Council does not agree with the category awarded by the censors, it is at liberty to alter the category and to insist that the alteration is observed by the exhibitor.
3. The certificate awarded by the censor must be exhibited on the screen for at least ten seconds (this condition is scarcely observed).
4. The categories are:
   "U"—Universal Exhibition to adults and children alike.
   "A"—"Adult" Exhibition. In the words of the Council this means "*No 'A' film shall be exhibited at the premises during the time that any child under or appearing to*

be under the age of sixteen years is therein unless the child is in the company of a parent or bona fide adult guardian of the child."

"H"—"Horrific" Category, i.e. for public exhibition when no children under 16 are present. "No 'H' film shall be exhibited at the premises during the time that any child (whether in arms or not) under or appearing to be under the age of 16 years is therein."

These categories have to be clearly displayed on the Category Boards at the entrances to the cinema, and on all posters and advertisements, including "trailers".

The "H" category was introduced in 1933, but it was not used until 1935. At present only a few local authorities recognise it. The total number of films originally given an "H" certificate by the censors is well under ten; but it is worth noting that in 1938 several old films of the horrific type which formerly held an "A" certificate were reissued with an "H" certificate.* There is no doubt that the Board of Censors has realised the harm that can be done to the child's mentality by allowing it to experience fright and terror, even in the company of a parent or guardian.

Such is the existing form of censorship in England. In Scotland there is considerably more laxity, and only recently has some attempt been made to exclude children from seeing "A" films unaccompanied. The quantity of feature ("dramas over 3,000 feet long" is the Board's meaning of "feature") films certified by the Board varies from year to year. In 1934 out of 688 feature films 278 received "U" certificates and 410 received "A". In 1936 out of about 650 subjects, 329 received "U" certificates. But according to the British Film Institute's classification, only about one in nine of these "U" films was really suitable for children.*

Most countries have recognised the need for placing restrictions on certain types of film.† In some, including not only those where there is no censorship, but also a number of others, children below a certain age may not be admitted to cinemas. This age varies from 5 years in Iran and Portugal, to 18 years in certain parts of Switzerland and Austria. In a few countries such as Japan and India, there are no legal restrictions. In federal countries such as U.S.A. and Switzerland there are local differences. In other countries (Sweden and some Swiss Cantons) children may not be admitted to performances which end after a certain hour, unless they are accompanied by their parents.

In most cases the censors are appointed by the Government. There is also the distinction between countries where children are forbidden to attend any film which is not passed as suitable for them, and those, such as this country, where discretion is left to the parents and children may only be admitted if accompanied by an adult. There seems to be no agreement in standards or practice. In most countries the age is fixed at 16, but in some it is as high as 18 or as low as 12. In some countries children under 5 or 6 are refused altogether. In Denmark about 25 per cent of feature films are considered unsuitable for children, in Belgium about 30 per cent, in Czechoslovakia, 43 per cent. Dr. Dale, representing the Payne Fund, told the Child Welfare Committee at the League of Nations that out of 336 films produced in the U.S.A. in 1935, only 30 or about 10 per cent were regarded as suitable for children. About 21 per cent were regarded as fair, and nearly 70 per cent were considered unsatisfactory. (No wonder the organiser of children's matinees has a hard time to find a supply of suitable films!)

It is curious that in the U.S.A.—the most film-minded public in the world—there are scarcely any restrictions on the attendance of children at the cinema. In practically no States are the regulations as to the films which may be exhibited framed with special reference to the needs of children. It is estimated that eleven million boys and girls under 14 attend cinemas in the U.S.A. every week.

Complaints against the censorship are developing into jokes. Even *Punch* (29th June, 1938) has a dig at the abuse:

Urchin: "Oi, Miss! Can we come to the concert?"

Social Worker: "Yes, of course you can."

Urchin: "Do we 'ave to bring our adults?"

The fact is that "children" (i.e. persons under 16) are becoming very ingenious in devising methods for circumventing the regulations. This artifice only applies, of course, to areas where the regulations are strictly enforced. The writer could name a dozen areas where by long custom the local authority takes not the slightest notice of the regulations, and unaccompanied children are admitted to "A" films as if they were adults. But the stricter the local authority, the more audacious the devices used for getting into the cinema. The usual practice is for "children" to wait outside the cinema until a suitable adult appears. "Take me with you, please mister", is the verbal approach, and the boy pushes his pennies into the hand of the adult. Once in the cinema he disappears. There is no attempt at pretending to be a "bona fide adult guardian."

But boys who are determined to see an "A" film will attempt more ingenious methods. They have been discovered dressed up in an elder brother's long trousers, with an unlighted cigarette in their lips. Managers have reported that faked birth certificates have been produced.

When the Erith Education Committee were discussing the alteration from "A" to "U" certificate for *Snow White*, Councillor Luck referred to the fact that children could and did see "A" films. "Many children," he said, "wait outside cinemas for simple-faced persons like me and then ask us to take them in—and I must confess we do."

Lady Worsley Taylor, J.P., representing Women's Advisory Committees in three counties, referred to this loophole at the 1938 Conference of the Central Conservative Women's Advisory Committee:

"What is the good of this classification ('A' and 'U') when not only can children go into the cinema with their fathers and mothers and uncles and aunts, but they can also wait outside in a queue until an old person comes along, and say: 'Please can we go in with you?' As that humorous writer of sub-leaders in *The Times* expressed it; the term 'Adults Only' is as misleading as 'Permanent Wave'."

This kind of sharp practice is evidently widespread. Recently the writer learnt of a far more unpleasant practice which is growing in some districts in London, where youths of 17 or 18 hang around the cinema entrances, waiting, in the role of "adult guardians", to find girls of 14 or 15 who want to see the film, and towards whom the youths have intentions which may not be indicated until they are side by side in the blackness of the cinema.

All these jokes, complaints and delinquencies suggest all too clearly that the border line at 16 years old is being abused. It may be argued that any other age limit would arouse the same difficulties. The abuse could, of course, be solved by drastic action—the complete prohibition of entrance to persons under 16, whether accompanied or alone, on the part of the local authority. This would have the most serious effect on box office receipts, and would lead to a downward revaluation in all "A" films. Every exhibitor is only too anxious to help the local authority to enforce the existing regulations. The discovery of a boy or girl under 16, alone in the cinema during an "A" film, may easily lead to prosecution, a fine, unwelcome

* Among the films thus treated are, according to "Variety": *The Vampire, King Kong, Frankenstein, Hands of Orlac, Devil Doll, Invisible Man, Jekyll and Hyde, Ninth Guest, Dracula's Daughter, Murders in the Rue Morgue, Vampire Bat, Son of Kong, Werewolf of London, House of Doom, Mark of the Vampire, Man who Changed His Mind,* and *Bride of Frankenstein.*

* British Film Institute Conference, 1937, Mr. Simon Rowson.

† "Recreational Aspects of the Cinema," by S. W. Harris of the Home Office; and League of Nations Reports.

publicity, and a licence in danger of being withdrawn. But how can the Manager of the cinema be certain of preventing the entrance of children, when they adopt such skilled tactics? He is in an unenviable position.

The other possibility which may one day be considered is the alteration of age from 16 to 15 or 14. The age at which adult films can be appreciated is surprisingly low in urban areas where cinema-going has been long established as a juvenile habit.

The growth of the attitude of sophistication primarily depends on physical changes, which are the concern—the very serious concern of those who are competent to deal with adolescents in the cinema. For those who study children there is an intermediate stage of great interest, when the child begins to think he or she is old enough for adult films. This is especially noticeable in the closely populated areas of London. Managers of cinemas report that the children think themselves too old for "Kid's Shows" at a surprisingly early age. This is a natural reflection of semi-adult life which the children lead long before they are due to leave school —the older girls acting as substitute mothers, and the boys eager to earn money and to take part in adult life. The Payne Fund* investigators describe a series of cases to show the growth of this maturer attitude. "Certain fourth-graders showed in the most undisguised fashion a great interest in serial thrillers. They talked freely and spoke with frank enthusiasm. The sixth-graders were reluctant to talk. They admitted interest yet felt some shame at their interest in a 'childish' picture. Their attitude was one of affected sophistication. The attitude of the eighth-graders was however, one of spontaneous and frank disapproval, dislike, and disgust at serials. The steps were three in number—frank approval, affected sophistication, and mature disapproval."

IT is a common delusion to suppose that the really harmful element for children in an "A" film is a long intimate love scene. Nothing is farther from the facts. But let it be quite clear that we are discussing children, and not adolescents. Children are bored—enormously bored—by love-making on the screen. The mere sight of a woman who seems likely to

* 1928. U.S.A. "Motion Pictures and Youth," W. W. Charters.

fulfil this function in the story may provoke disapproval from the children. The reason is obvious. Love-making is, *par excellence*, an activity which holds up the action of the film. It is, therefore, a bugbear. Children cannot identify themselves with the emotions being expressed. Kissing provides the nadir of tedium, and if long drawn out, it provokes the most violent catcalls. In the opinion of the children, osculation is the thief of time.

The Payne Fund Report* gives details: "Most children of 9 gave very little response to love scenes. At 10 some were found to respond. At 11 and 12 others responded. Above 13 there was usually a definite response."

The L.C.C. Enquiry† is very precise on this point:

"All inspectors who mention it, and in this they are supported by most of the evidence of the teachers, are convinced that the morally questionable element in films is ignored by children of school age. The element which the adult would most deprecate to be put before children does, in fact, bore them."

THE Payne Fund, it should be added, financed a series of studies dealing with the effect of films on youth in the U.S.A. In 1928 a group of University psychologists, sociologists and educational experts were invited by the Motion Picture Research Council to plan a programme of study to discuss the effects of films on children. The investigations extended from 1929 to 1932.

The results of the investigations were published in a series of twelve monographs by The Macmillan Company, and the monographs were summarised in a further volume.

Recently these findings have been ruthlessly debunked by Dr. Mortimer Adler of the University of Chicago, in *Art and Prudence* (Longmans: New York. 1937.) This long philosphical work has been potted into an entertaining brochure, *Are We Movie-Made?* by Raymond Moley (Macy-Masius: New York. 1938. One Dollar). Mr. Moley quotes heavily from Dr. Adler, criticising the scientific accuracy of the Payne Studies, "monumental in the matters of expense, size and pretention". The condemnation of the methods of the several Professors and Doctors is something more serious than a mere academic teacup storm, and anyone taking a close interest in the subject of the effect of films on children, especially in encouraging delinquence, should certainly digest Mr. Moley's book before swallowing the much-vaunted findings of the Payne Fund investigators.

Is there any prospect that the age division of 16 will be reconsidered? Not at present. But there are reasons why a new and lower age division should be suggested:

1. The present age division is being abused, largely because persons under 16 find in some "A" films the type of entertainment which gives them pleasure.

2. The attitude of the inhabitants of urban areas towards cinemagoing has completely altered since the age division of 16 was imposed. Nowadays boys and girls of 14 are hardened film fans, and are far less likely to be mal-influenced by films at that age than were their fathers and mothers in their adolescence.

3. There is very little psychological support for the arbitrary choice of the age of 16, below which the person can, one supposes, be morally damaged and above which he or she is immune.

4. The age division of 16 does not refer directly to children but to adolescents. Public, and scientific, opinion is coming more and more to regard the effect of the film on the child of 6 to 11 as of far greater social importance than the effect on the adolescent, the basis of whose behaviour is already formed and whose physique is already mature.

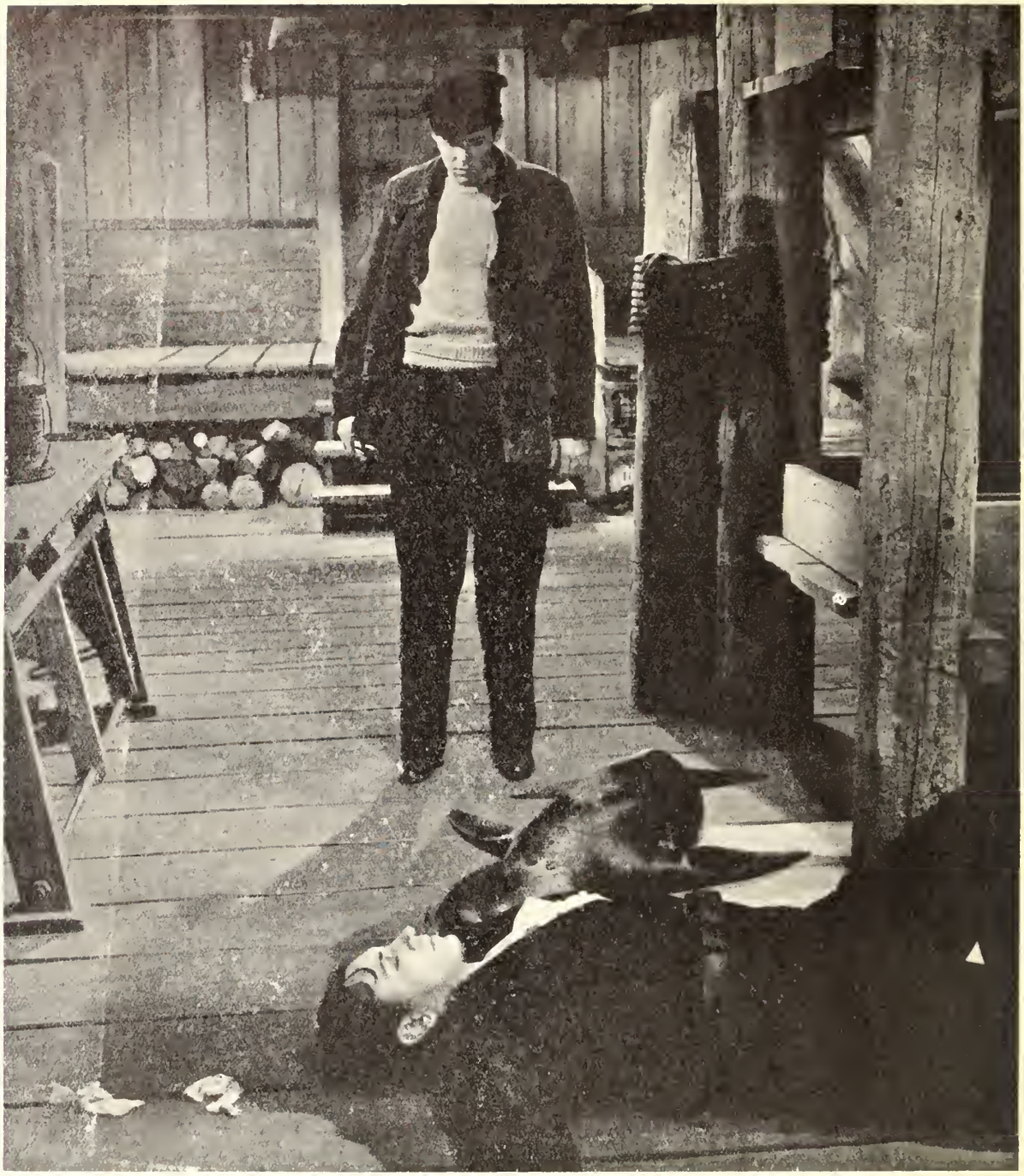
These and other reasons prompt one to repeat, Why 16?

* 1928. U.S.A. "Motion Pictures and Youth," W. W. Charters.

† School Children and the Cinema. L.C.C. 1932.

SPAWN of the NORTH

Basil Wright reviews the new Henry Hathaway film, together with 'Marco Polo' and the newest and last Laurel and Hardy...



Spawn of the North (*Paramount*)

SPAWN OF THE NORTH could be both praised and attacked from the documentary point of view—praised for its vivid and atmospheric presentation of the Alaskan seascapes and the men who dwell and work in them at the salmon fisheries, and blamed for hitching on to them an emotional and personal story about the stellar passions of its cast, which mostly hails from Sunny California. Personally speaking, I prefer to remember it only as one of the few occasions recently when I have felt a sense of real enjoyment (entertainment, too, if you will) in the vast temples of the West End. This film, in fact, has something which the cinema of bygone days (*O quam te memorem virgo*) used to supply as a matter of course—action and thrills, the quickened pulse and the lump in the throat. You remember *Way Down East* and the like? The heroine with the illegitimate baby thrust forth into the night, and into the ice floe rushing towards the falls? There must be many—I think I am one of them—who will never quite get the same thrill as they did when Barthelmess snatched Gish from the icy jaws at the last impossible moment. Sentimentality, passion, and a high wind over sea and land ought to be as popular now as they were then, and perhaps they would be if we had a few more films like *Spawn of the North*.

You are not especially asked to believe in the story. But the tale of two buddies whose friendship splits when the one turns fish-pirate and the other sides with the law, strings along more convincingly than the conventional triangle, which is most divinely conspicuous by its absence. The two females stick to their men, and exhibit a gratifying toughness of demeanour when things get dirty. But the important point is that the story is worked out with liberal lashings of natural action and of the elements. There is a grand sequence in which a vast iceberg is detached from a glacier by the stentorian singing of "Mother Machree": the scene is impressive and as bizarre as only Ma Nature can be, and the climax, when the fishermen shout and clang their bells as tons of ice slide into the water, is big enough without the subsequent smashing of a boat by the angry ice. There is a rough-house of vintage quality, which

makes old Polo's Pekin battle look like the tea-fight it really is—men fighting with axe, harpoon, and belaying pins by night, on the superstructure of the salmon-traps, with the Arctic waters lit by the glare of searchlights or flares. It is a real fight, and reminds us what really happens if you hit a man on the head with sharp and heavy metal, or fire a harpoon point-blank into his chest. And there is a magnificent finale, with black sheep buddy sailing himself and the villain into the crackling jaws of the glacier. You can smell the ice.

As for the emotional story, I like it immensely. For one thing it is brilliantly cast. Henry Fonda is very good as the law-abiding boy, and George Raft is really magnificent as his sinning friend. Moreover, Dorothy Lamour—rejoicing no doubt in her new-found freedom from the sarong—acts, and acts finely, as Raft's tough mistress. Add John Barrymore, as the sententious editor with a heart almost of gold, and Akim Tamiroff as the Russian fish-pirate—as bad as bad can be—and the usual excellencies of the small parts, and you have all you could ever ask for, even from Paramount's casting department.

All this brings us to the consideration of Henry Hathaway, the director. I am astonished to recall that he also made *Bengal Lancer*, but not even this fact will deter me from rating him very high—and that not because of Alaskan location work, but because of his sensibility and sensitiveness on the set. Observe carefully his direction of the scenes between Raft and Lamour. Note first the verisimilitude of the settings, second, the modest but unerring rightness of all his camera angles, and third, the sense of the ebb and flow of passion between two tough but inarticulate humans, which makes you forget to be superior even if hokum is at its height. He even gets away—triumphantly—with the Our-Dumb-Friend angle, supplied by Slicker, a fantastically intelligent performing seal. Fourthly and finally, though perhaps the very essence of the story may have done it for him, one may praise the fine timing, which more than once carries an emotional scene (twice as slow as even Hollywood plays them) on the backlash of a smashingly fast action-sequence. The script would indeed plot itself as an elegant and satisfying graph, and I rather think it would also have received a good mark from Aristotle. It is certainly the first time I have sat through a two-hour film and not found it a moment too long.

Poor Polo!

The Adventures of Marco Polo is so ineffably bad a film that the modest critic must make a point of producing his most kindly microscope (all components rose-tinted) to scrutinise the opus very carefully for its good moments. Such a scrutiny reveals one or two dramatically effective shots (camera work by Mate), such as the prisoners tied to stakes ready for execution by arrow, which has an authentic Doré touch; and a pleasing back-view glimpse of Kublai Khan travelling through the streets of Pekin in a howdah supported by *two* elephants. It also reveals the superb efficiency of Basil Rathbone, who brings a semblance of life to the stilted and melodramatic figure of Ahmed, the naughty prime minister who feeds live girls to his vultures and disposes of male friends into a lion's den conveniently situate under the front parlour. Rathbone, cold as ice and twice as pellucid, stalks through the film regardless of everything and everyone, intent only, one presumes, on preserving against enormous odds his reputation as a good technician. Which word brings us, alas! to the consideration of Gary Cooper, who either has no technique if not directed well, or, more probably, just gave up trying. At any rate he trots out all the hackneyed old gestures with obvious boredom and strolls out of camera range with a shrugging sigh of relief.

One of the chapter headings of that old liar, Sir John Mandeville, runs, "Of the Faith and Belief of Prester John, but he hath not the full Belief as we have". This may serve as a suitable motto for Samuel Goldwyn, on whose mat the cat will no doubt shortly deposit the mangled remains of this film. Goldwyn's faith and belief is—quite rightly—in that Kali-like Goddess, Box Office, but it would be too kind to say that he has merely misjudged her this time. On the contrary, he has done what no human with a nose for receipts has any right to do. He has compromised all down the line. He has mixed up in a giant cocktail shaker all the wrong ingredients from *Lost Horizon*, *Mr. Deeds*, and *It Happened One Night*, and has given the shaking to Archie Mayo instead of to the maestro Capra.

The result is very much as though Lubitsch had woken up in Shangri La with a really vicious hangover. The possibilities of the plain narrative of Marco Polo's adventures have been ignored. Instead, it would appear that Goldwyn's first idea was to have a jolly joke and treat the whole film with the most sophisticated of modern Americanisms. Well, we could have taken it. But then—not having the full belief as we have—he wondered if this might not be satire (satire is poison to his Goddess), and so switched over to Romance with a rolling capital R. At this point he should have called the whole thing off, but no, here it is, in all its dragging length, cheapjack humour (Ernest Truex tripping up steps or frightened by squibs), Gary Cooper—oh so bored—teaching the art of kissing to Sigrid Gurie (a newcomer and a total loss), Kublai Khan (ruler of half the world) lolling about on a Quatorze the Fifteenth throne like a tired business man watching a set of dumb chorines, and Binnie Barnes—well, that will do; it's not her fault after all.

The joke, which is after all only a re-hash of *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, depends on pace and good dialogue; neither are here. The romance depends on personality and sex-appeal; the girl has neither, the man, as already indicated, is not bothering to use what he has. All that remains is the spectacle, but the big scenes themselves lack fire, and even the rough-house round the walls of Pekin is half-hearted. It is all a great pity, especially for the audience and, by implication, for Mr. Goldwyn, who has given us a lot of good stuff in the past and will no doubt give us more in the future. It is sad that he did not put this one on the shelf, but there, we all make mistakes sometimes.

The last of Laurel

The blow has fallen; a final announcement from M.G.M. confirms the permanent break-up of the Laurel and Hardy team. It is hardly worth while imagining what disagreements have caused the tragedy; one can only, with bowed head, accept the fact. Even the news that Harry Langdon—a great comedian if ever there was one—is taking Laurel's place is but cold comfort. *Nous n'irons plus aux bois, les lauriers sont coupés.*

So *Blockheads* is their last film; and it is perhaps fitting that it should be, in every sense, the Laurel and Hardy to end all Laurel and Hardys, a lunatic swansong, plotless, reasonless, but yet the final distillation of all they have ever done. From the purist point of view we shall be compelled to rate it below the shapely and consistent *Way Out West;* but as fans, and may the curse of the Ritz Brothers light on all who are not, we may blast away all critical reasoning on the wings of a gigantic guffaw. The opening gag is irresistible. While shells burst and the troops go over the top in 1918 Laurel is left behind to guard the empty trench. A serious farewell to Hardy—a cataclysm of minnies and Verey lights—a date change to 1938—and behold the faithful soul still keeping faith to a long-vanished C.O., guarding the trench, now well overgrown with weeds and shaded by a monstrous pile of empty bully-beef tins. It is only when he shoots down a passing private plane that he learns that there is no longer a war. So the scene is set for his reunion with Hardy at a home for aged soldiers—Hardy, married to a tough little woman, and doomed, as ever, to disaster. How Hardy carries Laurel tenderly in his arms, under the erroneous impression that he has only one leg, how they climb and reclimb fifteen flights of laborious stairs, how the heroine is disguised as an armchair and constantly sat in, how James Finlayson makes one all-too-brief but electrifying appearance in full morning dress and a bad temper—all these, and many other delights, let the screen itself divulge. In such scenes the element of grotesque fantasy, which threads all through their saga, has never flowered so lushly.

Let us hope that a fund will be immediately forthcoming to buy and preserve all Laurel and Hardy films, and institute a cinema, with a constant repertory of their works. For apart from the nostalgia of old times, it is a shocking thought that a younger generation might have to grow up without the beneficent assistance of their ripe philosophy.

No more Laurel and Hardys—savour if you dare the full meaning of that phrase. Beddoes and Poe could invent no mo' macabre a dirge.

JUDGMENT SEAT

The best British and American writing on new films and plays assembled by H. E. Blyth

★ ★ ★

Love Finds Andy Hardy

(George B. Seitz—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Mickey Rooney, Lewis Stone, Judy Garland.

This film is one of a series that has recently become surprisingly popular in America, apparently because it gives an accurate picture of life in a typical middle-class family. The episodes are for the most part briskly humorous or lavishly sentimental. But this particular item in the series should be of deep interest to all students of the history of morals, for it reveals quite unblushingly the erotic adventures of American adolescence, adventures which apparently receive the complete approval of society. A most respectable Judge, for example (acted by Mr. Lewis Stone), watches with a complacent smile while his son, under 16 years of age (acted by Mickey Rooney), is violently and passionately embraced by what appears to be a rather older young woman. The snobbery of the very young is quite as frankly displayed, and the whole forms a study as informative as it is distasteful to watch, though the arch humour with which everything is observed is perhaps an unnecessary turn of the screw. —*The Times*

Our favourite neighbours, the Hardys, are visiting again, this time in a felicitous little comedy which goes—and goes delightfully—under the name *Love Finds Andy Hardy*. The best of it is that love not only finds Andy Hardy, but finds him being played by Mickey Rooney who ranks second to Walt Disney's Dopey as our favourite movie hero of the year. Watching Mickey's Andy on the screen is practically as good as reading Mark Twain and Booth Tarkington; he's the perfect composite of everybody's kid brother.

If you must know what happens, we will report simply that the Hardys, severally and collectively, are up to their old crises again. There is the crisis of the new cook. There is the crisis of Marian's attempt at coffee-making. There is the crisis of Andy's car—a $12 down payment and $8 to go. The nicest thing about all the Hardy crises is that they resolve themselves so beautifully. There was Andy one minute, crushed under Polly's scornful cry of "gigolo!" just because he had promised to keep Beezy's girl away from the other Carvel young bloods; and there was Andy the next, leading the grand march with the little next-door girl who turned out to be not merely Judy Garland but the daughter of a musical comedy star. That's glory for you, and glory, too, for all the other Hardys—Lewis Stone, Fay Holden, Cecilia Parker and their friends—for turning out such a friendly, likeable show.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

The Rage of Paris

(Henry Koster—Universal)
Danielle Darrieux, Douglas Fairbanks, jun., Louis Hayward, Mischa Auer.

Gay and amusing as the picture is, the star's the thing. Mlle. Danielle Darrieux, whose exquisite oval face combines the tranquillity of a Dietrich beauty with the mobility of a Lombard comedienne, is making her English-speaking début, and a delightful début it is.

In two minutes you know that this girl is not carrying all her goods in the front window, yet from the start you know her for an actress of talent and technique. She calls up her resources sparingly. She specialises in contrasts, with a blinding flash of comedy here, a breathless moment of pathos there, each coming and going so quickly that you find yourself watching her in a state of eager anticipation, anxious not to miss a nuance.

Well, maybe, that's enough about the girl. If you don't like her, I give up. I like everything about her and can find nothing to criticise at all. The picture is brightly trivial—all about a poor French girl looking for a job in New York, being set up as a fictitious Parisian débutante by a boarding-house friend (Helen Broderick) and an ambitious waiter (Mischa Auer).

Unfortunately, the wealthy young man the syndicate desire to snare is a close friend of Douglas Fairbanks, jun., who had an encounter with the girl in her job-hunting days. His efforts to expose her are the picture.

But the little things make the fun. Like Mlle. Darrieux saying, "I can took it" or vamping Fairbanks' valet with conjuring tricks, or Auer seeing his dream-restaurant evaporate before his agonised eyes.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

I cannot, I am sorry to say, join in the rhapsodies that have greeted Danielle Darrieux in *The Rage of Paris*. When this truly adorable young French actress appeared as Marie Vetsera in *Mayerling* few were unimpressed by her abounding charm and loveliness and acting skill. In this trifle, meant solely to entertain, she is just thrown away. Really sensitive and exquisite personalities with intelligence and quality are so rare upon the screen that dramatic gifts such as Miss Darrieux undoubtedly possesses should be exploited in a manner worthy of their owner. To ask so delightful a creature to fool about with crazy comedy and pretend to outdo Claudette Colbert is to my mind just an outrage.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

The Amazing Doctor Clitterhouse

(Anatole Litvak—Warners)
Edward G. Robinson, Claire Trevor, Humphrey Bogart.

From that bit of masterful criminology that graced the Broadway stage last season comes a vigorous film of psychoses and gangster doings. You remember that Dr. Clitterhouse was something of a nut on the subject of subconscious reaction to crime. He had a notebook filled with data, which he collected and checked by indulging himself in nefarious businesses. It was a formidable play, made conspicuously sinister by the quiet underplaying of Sir Cedric Hardwicke. Now, with Edward G. Robinson in the title rôle, the play takes on a more obvious quality, more gusto, and quite a little more fun. It is no subtle study of the mind now. It is a gagged-up melodrama decorated

with that superb garishness which keeps Hollywood melodramatics alive. Mr. Robinson, no suave gentleman of advanced medicine, is more a reformed gangster than vice versa. No matter, the picture has a fine pace and a startlingly effective plot twist that make it the best of current gunplay. *See for yourself.* —*Stage*

Yellow Sands

(Herbert Brenon—A.B.P.C.)
Dame Marie Tempest, Wilfrid Lawson, Robert Newton, Belle Chrystall.

This simple story has been told with that understanding of simplicity which is one of the film's rarest virtues; the characters have been allowed to come naturally to life, and the director has neither patronised them nor allowed any taint of over-emphasis to spoil their emotions. The cool, fresh winds from the lovely western countryside seem to have blown away the cobwebs of the studio, and the quiet dignity of fields and sea provides the atmosphere which each player has so well absorbed. An old woman, studying the little community in which she lives and thinking of those she loves, is faced with the problem of her will. After she dies—and there is infinite sadness and dignity in her passing—her will is read to the consternation of some and the surprise of all; for she has left her money to the one person who least expects it, but whom, in her wisdom, she knows to be most worthy of it. Dame Marie Tempest is the old lady, gentle and tender but also shrewd and perceptive, but, above all, blessed with the tolerance which comes from understanding. As her idle, good-for-nothing brother, Mr. Wilfrid Lawson has also caught the spirit of understanding; he, too, has the wisdom of the countryside. In sharp contrast is Mr. Robert Newton's portrait of a hot-headed Communist, an idealist whose implicit belief in equality we may never for one moment question. The other members of the cast, and notably Miss Belle Chrystall and Mr. Edward Rigby, also give performances that discover depth of character in simple people; and our gratitude is due to the whole company and to their director, Mr. Herbert Brenon, for giving us so charming a picture of England.

—*The Times*

You come away from *Yellow Sands* pleasantly aglow. The picture does not attack your senses violently with machine guns, with tumultuous buffoonery. It gets you quietly like a tranquil sea at sundown. There is no hilarity, no misery, just a smile, a tear, and —poof!—it's over as quickly as a good time or a spot of trouble. Eden Phillpotts, the author, has fashioned a magnetic tale out of events which might happen in any family, events which at first would appear too humdrum to be worthy of record. Aunt Jennifer lives in a cottage on the Cornish coast, and as her end draws near she considers her family and how her modest estate should be disposed. The story ambles easily through Cornish scenes so wide, so grand, so cunningly framed, you long to fill your lungs with the wind. There are one or two technical faults—Aunt Jennifer's death is too protracted—but to dwell on these would be carping. See *Yellow Sands* and breathe.

—McKenzie Porter, *The Evening Standard*

SEE's Selection

The Film of the 11th Olympic Games	* * *
Spawn of the North	* *
Dawn of Iran	*
Love finds Andy Hardy	*
The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse	*
Blockheads	*

Other Films covered in this issue

The Adventures of Marco Polo

The Rage of Paris

Yellow Sands

This Man is News

White Banners

The Crowd Roars

Advance Democracy

Uncle Moses

This Man Is News

(David MacDonald—Paramount)
Barry K. Barnes, Alistair Sim, Valerie Hobson

This is just about as neat a bit of comedy-thrills in the *Thin Man* tradition as you could wish to see. It only goes to show that money is not the thing that makes good films and that in this country our producers in their really sane moods have as good a chance as the chaps in Hollywood. This is a story of a Fleet-street reporter who finds himself in a series of thrilling situations—murders and such-like—that make him front-page news in his own paper. Barry K. Barnes is the reporter. He was good in *The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel* and better in *Who Goes Next?* but this film gives him his first opportunity in smart comedy and it shows that in this line he is a great find for British pictures. Valerie Hobson, also previously restricted to serious parts scores in a humorous role as the hero's wife, who plays quite a big part in the exciting and mystifying incidents and provides a comedy surprise at the end which is typical of the resourceful fun of the writers, Roger MacDougall and Allan Mackinnon. Dialogue, direction (by David MacDonald) and acting in this film fall nowhere short of the Hollywood standard. It is a picture you must see, especially for the delicious burlesque of a testy news editor by Alastair Sim.

—A. Jympson Harman, *The Evening News*

White Banners

(Edmund Goulding—Warners)
Claude Rains, Fay Bainter, Jackie Cooper, Bonita Granville.

As smug a bit of turn-the-other-cheek hokum as ever saw the light of script, yet performed so palatably and presented so unpretentiously that it is a lesson in how to sermonize on the screen. Mr. Lloyd C. Douglas' novel dealt with Hannah, a philosophical peddler of apple-peelers, who comes to the home of Professor Ward, straightens out all his and his family's problems, and goes away leaving her philosophy with them. In the rôle of Hannah, Fay Bainter is gallantly assured; in the rôle of Professor Ward, Claude Rains avoids all the homely clichés to make his character understandable and likeable. Kay Johnson, Jackie Cooper, Bonita Granville they too keep Mr. Douglas' platitudinizing from becoming too blatant. The most satisfying feature of the picture is Miss Bainter's wardrobe. Frowzy is the word, gloriously, unbelievably, beautifully frowzy, and the consistency with which she shuns glamour must give the designer boys many a bad start, the public many a good one. *You know people like these.*

—*Stage*

The Adventures of Marco Polo

(Archie Mayo—United Artists)
Gary Cooper, Sigrid Gurie, Basil Rathbone.

Sam Goldwyn's latest excursion into the mists of long ago "with a cast of five thousand" is that delight of my childhood's days, *The Adventures of Marco Polo*. He had to fit Gary Cooper with a part, and having conjured up from the wilds of Brooklyn a new Norwegian glamour girl in Sigrid Gurie he was by some singular persuasiveness of his own able to enlist the help of one of America's finest playwrights, Robert E. Sherwood, in carrying out his singular and original ideas. The result is one of the most extraordinary and unintentional stimulants to laughter ever known to cinema-goers. It combines spectacle with absurdity, and has such a defiance of period in manner and speech, and so reckless a disregard of probability and the original facts as to enable the most uninstructed to derive cinematic enjoyment. In fact, the less sensitive the spectator the greater the pleasure. For there can be small satisfaction in all this medley of extravagant nonsense for anyone of extreme sensibility or with a regard for truth.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

Mr Samuel Goldwyn, a zealous man who likes to add to the culture and erudition of the world around him, has just spent a great deal of time and money in telling us that Marco Polo, a Venetian merchant of the thirteenth century, made his way across the outlands to the China of Kublai Khan and brought back (1) spaghetti, (2) coal, (3) gunpowder. At least, that is all that I can put on the credit side of the picture, the rest seeming to me just Hollywood with funny hats on, beaten before they started by an unfinished fragment by Coleridge. A new Norwegian blonde, Miss Sigrid Gurie, with wide light eyes and a

(*Continued over*)

Marco Polo—continued

generous mouth, demonstrates the thirteenth century kiss with Mr. Cooper, and Mr. George Barbier plays Kublai Khan like a sugar daddy at an Atlantic City outing. My favourite line in this historical survey is the Chinese general's greeting to Marco Polo before the siege of Pekin, "Siddown, have a drink."

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

The Crowd Roars

(Richard Thorpe—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Robert Taylor, Edward Arnold, Frank Morgan, Maureen O'Sullivan.

Magnificently done, this yarn of Robert Taylor as a young boxer who reads Gibbon in his bath, falls in love with a racketeer's daughter and commercialises fisticuff strategy. Despite the trite situations of hating to hit an old pal (whom he kills in the ring) and winning a losing fight at the sight of Maureen O'Sullivan at the ringside, Mr. Taylor and the director do a splendid job of entertainment. Frank Morgan as a shiftless daddy, Lionel Stander as a trainer, and Edward Arnold and Nat Pendleton as rival big-shots are immense. Every possible device of suspense and humour is used; the dramatics of boxing which the stage can never approach are fully exploited; and interludes of wooing and gangsterism balance a brilliantly-made picture which holds you for every second.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

The Crowd Roars is a stirring picture hung nicely between the tough and tender, the bitter and sweet. There is no lag between the many peaks of suspense, no anaemia in the cut-throats or the comedy. And it gives a sharp focus view of the twisters who wax fat on rotting sport. Taylor is up to his usual high standard. Frank Morgan's performance is magnificent.

—Mackenzie Porter, *The Evening Standard*

Advance Democracy

(Ralph Bond—The Four London Co-operative Societies.)
Fred Baker, Kathleen Gibbons.

This film marks the advent of the Co-ops into the field of cinema, and it is gratifying to note that the approach chosen is not a narrow one. For *Advance Democracy*, while containing much direct propaganda for the Co-ops, is nevertheless chiefly concerned in emphasising united action on the part of all men of goodwill against the menace of fascism. The director—Ralph Bond—has, it appears, deliberately chosen a style and story of the simplest type. He shows us a craneman from the London Docks and his wife. He lets us eavesdrop on their conversation over the evening meal; they disagree as to the value of the co-operative system, and lo and behold! the radio provides a timely talk on the subject by A. V. Alexander himself. The message sinks in. The man leads a group of his fellow workers to the May Day demonstration in Hyde Park. To call all this crude would be to beg the question; in fact, Bond may rightly argue that a broad and vital issue, so presented, will affect a greater number of ordinary men and women than if a more complex scheme had been chosen. Instead of frills or thrills there is a real sincerity, which is much strengthened by the excellent acting of Fred Baker and Kathleen Gibbons in the main parts.

Bond has done an excellent job in the cross-cut sequence of Alexander, his listeners and the re-enactments of early Co-op history; and the synthesis of marching songs at the end, devised by Benjamin Britten, is grand. One can foresee the possibility of a series of films of this type being of great value, although many may think that a simultaneous series of a less dramatic and more analytic nature should also be made. Incidentally, the film could not appear at a more apposite moment; it may articulate for many the emotions they have not yet learnt to analyse and control.

—C. M., *See*

Uncle Moses

(Sidney M. Goldin and Aubrey Scotto—Yiddish Talking Pictures.)
Maurice Schwartz.

This is an observant and intimate study of a Jewish community in a poor district of New York. The dialogue is in Yiddish, and the few captions barely describe the incidents of the film; the action is slight, stifled by a great deal of talk but also, no doubt, curtailed by the limited resources of those responsible for the production. The story is strangely fragmentary and inconclusive; it outlines the problems of this community—both personal and economic—but scarcely attempts to solve them. Uncle Moses, as the owner of a prosperous business, is looked up to and fawned upon by his less successful friends and relatives. But he is not happy. Some of his workers come out on strike, his young wife is pining and wants a divorce, and the nephew who helps him in the business is avaricious and resentful of all who threaten his inheritance. Uncle Moses loses his self-confidence and arrogance; he becomes suddenly an old man, tired and disillusioned. The characters talk incessantly, often with a sing-song intonation that becomes tedious to ears which cannot understand what they are saying. The acting is uniformly good and always expressive, and Mr. Maurice Schwartz, as Uncle Moses, gives a performance so rich in feeling, gesture and expression that his words need no translation.

—*The Times*

Uncle Moses, a Jewish film, will appeal to specialised audiences. The dialogue is in Hebrew, and the English captions are too few, and quite inadequate for the average cinemagoer. I found it most difficult to follow the slow-moving story, and the incessant droning speech of some of the principals. Maurice Schwartz as Uncle Moses, a wealthy Jewish clothier in that part of New York where Orchard and Delancey Streets meet, gives a very fine character performance, and is at all times convincing. His transformation from a massive and healthy man to a thin and feeble old one is highly realistic. It is unfortunate that the American producers of this film did not choose a subject with greater story material, though *Uncle Moses* will doubtless appeal to those better able to understand the Jewish life and language.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

The Film of the 11th Olympic Games

(Leni Riefenstahl—German.)

The Film of the Eleventh Olympic Games at Berlin, 1936, is one of the most remarkable sport films ever produced. Indeed, it is unique. While countless newsreels all over the world have shown separate sporting events, for the first time a full-length film has succeeded in revealing the "total" significance of all sports. For the first time in the history of sporting events what was real and serious, fierce and concrete, without pose and false pathos, has been subjected to the hand of a theatrical director. Miss Riefenstahl, however, has resisted the temptation to prettify the theme and allowed the Games to "come through" fairly evenly. Now and again her passion for "film composition" has marred one or two scenes. But the film will satisfy not only the sport specialist, who can watch the slow-motion movements of the world's finest athletes, but also the average spectator who did not see the Games. At first glance much of the film may appear as mere reporting, similar in character to the newsreels, but the expert will note the careful composition of the scenes—cutting took twenty months. What must have amazed everyone is the manner in which the cameras have been able to catch the facial expressions of the athletes during their most significant moments. In each sporting event the director has selected with consummate artistry for a close-up those movements of the particular athlete which the ordinary spectator cannot see. Miss Riefenstahl has "created" a film and not merely "pasted" together a prolonged newsreel of the Games. It is a film which will interest the whole world, for the whole world takes part in it.

—Berlin Correspondent, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary.

That the work of Leni Riefenstahl, director of "The Blue Light" and "The White Hell of Pitz Palu", should to-day be almost unknown outside Germany is a sad thing indeed. Talent is not so plentiful in Europe that we may watch its disappearance unmoved, and the German cinema, living on, on the memories of its golden age of a decade or so ago, is adopting a strange policy in keeping Leni Riefenstahl to itself. To-day the great German directors are scattered—some are in exile in Hollywood, some have lapsed into oblivion, some are dead—and now only Leni Riefenstahl is left. She, admittedly, belongs to a later period, to the twilight of the golden age, but the memory of "The Blue Light" must still be treasured by many. Yet we can expect to see but little more of her work, and a career that started so promisingly would seem doomed to end in the toils of limited specialisation.

The Flashing Stream

(Charles Morgan—Lyric Theatre)
Margaret Rawlings, Godfrey Tearle, Felix Aylmer.

Mr. Morgan most skilfully adds the strange to the usual. Does the theatre need Love's Everlasting Argument? Then here it is, but conducted by Senior Wranglers, with the Dark Lady of the Logarithms replacing the Dark Lady of the Sonnets in the heart of one who is a lunatic, a lover, and a poet, a mathematician and a naval officer all in one. Does the public insatiably crave for the Girl adventuring alone among the sequestered and sex-hungry men? Then here she is, but in the form of My Lady Algebra, which is certainly novel. Are we interested in the menace of the skies, the doom dropping from that hell which man has made of the heavens? Then here is the exciting discovery of the aerial torpedo, which, magnetised by the enemy plane, will track it to its ruin, abolish the bomber, and make Britain once more an island, the sky once more a canopy of peace. Do we need to see the Bad Woman? Then here she is "wusser than ever," possessed of lust and jealousy, and robed in the colour of the flame she merits. Do we want young men talking bawdy and an old man setting upon coarseness the bloom of style? Then here they are, with the First Lord of the Admiralty in the latter office. All these are there, and they are much. Yet the play is more. It is a profoundly interesting study of intellectual and physical passion, especially of that single-mindedness which set and holds the course of greatness, and of all impatient of the common touch.

The scene is an Atlantic island used for experiments. The brilliant Commander Ferrers who is working on the aerial torpedo, has lost his colleague Selby in an accident, and the only mathematician competent to take his place is Selby's sister, Karen. Her arrival among the all-male research party, housed in suitably monastic quarters, is at once necessary and perilous. Devotion to pure mathematics does not deprive either man or woman of more sensual thoughts and aspirations. (Every man, as Hamlet said, has business and desire.) There is the Admiral's lady, with whom she can lodge, but that jealous and vindictive creature, coveting Ferrers who will have none of her, immediately does a most unlikely even incredible thing. She tries to ruin the experiment, and she turns Karen Selby out of her house, which means straight into the welcoming arms of four lonely officers; more especially of Ferrers whom Karen is soon worshipping. Then the torpedo trials go wrong, stupid men complain of their wastefulness, and the Admiralty is turning fractious and threatens to stop the work, which means breaking Ferrers's heart if not his career. With a neat twist of invention Karen comes to the rescue, or rather she brings to the rescue a Civil Lord who is wiser than the Naval ones. All seems to be well for the future of mankind as well as for the lovers.

That after all is only the shell of the story. Within are the voices of Ferrers and Karen, who can discuss the metaphysics of single-mindedness and the relations of life and love to mathematics with an eloquence which does not forget theatrical values. They occasionally go on too long, especially at the end of the second act. But whenever you suggest a cut to a dramatist you inevitably mention the passage he likes best. So let the Amorous Wranglers be. Ferrers is an amazing person who can invent a torpedo or discuss "the flashing stream" of mind, with a mystical distaste for reason's chains comparable to that of Emily Brontë, whose poem, "The Prisoner," he nearly paraphrases. By any "type-casting" Mr. Godfrey Tearle is miles away from so volatile a mind, so tense and nervous a personality. But Mr. Tearle is an actor who can transcend type; he fights his way into the queer soul of Ferrers, commands his audience, and finely sustains the play, while Miss Margaret Rawlings is matching her subtlety with his strength and holds one continually by her wise blending of brain and blood in the nature of Karen. If Ferrers sets one thinking of Emily Brontë, there is something in Karen to remind us of John Donne. Mr. Felix Aylmer is an admirable tenant of the First Lord's chair; Miss Marda Vanne has a personality far too pleasant for the appalling woman she ingeniously presents. The officers may all be recommended for distinguished service. One hopes, by the way, that the British Admiralty is not really so incapable of seeing an argument which appears simple enough even to a non-nautical and non-mathematical mind. But all the part of the play about the invention is lucid and exciting a virtue rare in plays about inventions. Rarities, indeed, are common in this most uncommon piece, in which mathematics become a Tenth Muse, while Algebra and Venus rise together from Britannia's waves.

—Ivor Brown, *The Sunday Observer*

Genera

(George Bernard Shaw—Malvern Festival)

There is nothing in *Geneva*, Mr. Shaw's new play produced at Malvern, which Mr. Shaw has not said before and said more amusingly. The time for stretching out new social doctrines, apparently, is past. Man as a political animal is a failure, and all that can be done is to note the inconsistencies and absurdities into which his attempt to order the world on national lines has landed him.

These are brought out in a trial at The Hague, where the German, the Italian and the Spanish dictators appear to answer a variety of charges. The complaints come from a Jew ruined by anti-Semitism, a South American widow whose husband has been murdered in a revolution, a democratic representative of suppressed Parliamentary minorities, an English Bishop outraged by Communist propaganda in England, and a Russian outraged with equal sincerity by the propaganda of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Russia . . .

Geneva in this long last act, is good competent Shaw. But the hoax announcing the end of the world which ends the trial and the farcical stuff of the first two acts come perilously near at times to a long-winded parody of Mr. Shaw's own conventions.

—A. V. Cookman, *The New York Times*

OCTOBER RELEASES

SEE's Choice

Nothing Sacred (United Artists) * *
DIRECTOR: William Wellman
STARRING: Fredric March
Carole Lombard
(Reviewed March)

Judge Hardy's Children (M.G.M.) * *
DIRECTOR: George B. Seitz
STARRING: Mickey Rooney
Lewis Stone

In Old Chicago (20th Century-Fox) *
DIRECTOR: Henry King
STARRING: Alice Faye
Tyrone Power
Alice Brady
(Reviewed April)

Three Comrades (M.G.M.) *
DIRECTOR: Frank Borsage
STARRING: Margaret Sullavan
Robert Taylor
Franchot Tone
(Reviewed August)

Yellow Jack (M.G.M.) *
DIRECTOR: George B. Seitz
STARRING: Robert Montgomery
Virginia Bruce
Lewis Stone
(Reviewed August)

Other Releases include

The Drum (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: Zoltan Korda
STARRING: Sabu
Raymond Massey
Valerie Hobson
(Reviewed May–June)

Cocoanut Grove (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Alfred Santell
STARRING: Fred MacMurray
Harriet Hilliard

We're Going to be Rich (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Monty Banks
STARRING: Gracie Fields
Victor McLaglen
(Reviewed July)

Joy of Living (R.K.O. Radio)
DIRECTOR: Tay Garnett
STARRING: Irene Dunne
Douglas Fairbanks, jr.
(Reviewed August)

Cassidy of Bar Twenty (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Les Selander
STARRING: William Boyd
Russell Hayden

There's Always a Woman (Columbia)
DIRECTOR: Alexander Hall
STARRING: Joan Blondell
Melvyn Douglas
(Reviewed September)

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At the Malvern Festival

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THE CAPTIOUS TITLE WRITER

Title writing passed out as a major industry with the coming of sound.

Its refugees find work in dubbing films for export to foreign countries and in titling foreign films for American audiences.

But in the case of dubbed foreign films translations are not always exact.

TEN years ago and more, when the cinema had not yet attained speech, title writers such as Anita Loos and John Emerson, were the reigning Hollywood literati of the day. With baroque rhetorical flourishes they inserted Macaulayesque sentences into the mouths of babes and sages alike. They were a prolific and polysyllabic tribe, these caption scriveners, much too hardy to be beaten into submission by the invention of a mechanical gadget such as sound. Many of them turned to scenario writing, where they had to confine themselves to such monosyllables as could adequately be pronounced by the actors and actresses who had hitherto performed with their facial muscles, elbows, hands and knees. Others turned to the even less satisfactory task of writing titles for quasi-epic sound films which were nothing more or less than a lengthy series of protracted stills illustrating such nostalgic subtitles as "Napoleon's Retreat from Moscow—Dead and Dying litter the Steppe," or "Civil War—a Nation Sundered by Strife."

To-day the lost art of title writing has passed chiefly into the hands of those who superimpose captions on domestic films for showing in foreign countries. Each of the major Hollywood companies has its own title writers, for most American films intended for exhibition abroad are titled, only a few outstanding productions being laboriously dubbed with a new, foreign-language sound track. Likewise in New York City there are a few specialists who title foreign films for American consumption.

Superimposed titles to-day have almost entirely overcome the national limitations of sound films. The greater part of audiences frequenting foreign picture houses do not comprehend the language spoken in the picture. A good titling job, it is estimated, combined with the pictorial images on the screen, transmits 75 per cent of the value of the original and this figure increases or decreases with the lack of talkiness or talkiness of the film. The great problem of the title writer is to give as much of the dialogue as possible, without detracting from the visual.

The titler is always bound by the stringent mechanical requirements of the individual celluloid frame with which he works. First the foreign dialogue sheet of the film is translated and submitted to the censor board. In case of censorial deletion of certain scenes, the title writer subsequently attempts to incorporate the gist of these into his titles so as to effect smooth transition. A recent instance of censor trouble, in its application to titling, was seen in *Club de Femmes*, where one of the scenes showed Danielle Darrieux in illicit liaison with her lover, and the title represented them as about to be married. The censors let the scene pass but specified that the title should uphold morality and virtue, since most of the audience would understand the caption and not the French dialogue.

Armed with this dialogue script and a positive print of the film, the title writer goes into a huddle with a moviola, a small, movable projector on which the film image is seen under a magnifying glass and the sound heard from a small speaker. The glass can be lifted to allow the operator to mark the film with red grease in order to indicate the position of the title. On the moviola, the title-writer runs a portion of the film, determines where a title is necessary and what words it is to comprise, and indicates this on the film by a number which corresponds to the proper caption on his title chart. This procedure is known to the trade as "spotting."

The length of time a title is held on the screen is determined by the formula of approximately two six-letter words requiring a foot of film. The average length of a title is five feet, equivalent to about four seconds of screen time. The words superimposed on the screen must co-ordinate as much as possible with the spoken words, that is, begin and end at approximately the same time that the speaker does, and this is where most of the brain-twisting comes in. The average output of a title-writer is fifteen captions per hour, and since the usual film of eight reels has about 450 titles, the work consumes at least thirty hours.

FROM the title-writer, the marked film proceeds to a processing laboratory together with the completed list of captions. Each separate title is imprinted in white on a black ten by twelve inch card, which is photographed on to negative film for the specified amount of time it is to be held on the screen. This negative, with the titles in black on a white background, is co-ordinated with the pictorial negative of the film, both are run off together on a printing machine, and the result is a positive print with the titles in white at the bottom of the screen image.

The average cost of such a title negative is $500, but titles may be superimposed directly on a positive film without resorting to this expensive process. The titles are printed directly on the film celluloid, the silver emulsion is washed from the imprint, leaving the words in white.

Among recent films, *Symphony of Young Love*, a Czechoslovakian picture with 180 titles had the least, and *La Kermesse Héroïque* with 490 had the most. Probably the all-time record for maximum titles is held by *The Lower Depths*, which had 670 unusually lengthy captions.

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•John Henry Sweet dream man of the South

•Newest swing records reviewed by STAN PATCHETT

Maxine Sullivan (*Courtesy of the Melody Maker*)

JOHN HENRY is the sweet dream man of the south.

Even the realists are not allowed to have a clear vision of John Henry, whose private life would take the kind of explanation even Alistair Cooke would find difficult to gloss over in those smoothly flowing sentences of his.

I lived in New Orleans for awhile and John Henry became a very real person to me.

Any big buck with the reputation of being a crack jockey among easy riders and strength enough to do twice as much work as his puny rivals is called "John Henry".

Louis Paul had John in mind when he wrote his prize-winning short story "No More Trouble for Jedwick".

Gilmore Millen actually used him as his chief character in that fine book, "Sweet Man."

There is a work song about John Henry used by railroad gangs when driving spikes. Like most work songs, it is also sung on social occasions.

Man against machine is the theme of the ballad of John Henry.

The greatest steel driver in the deep south, his reputation is threatened when the railroad company he works for installs a steam drill.

Refusing to believe that his granite body will let him down he challenges the iron monster to a spike-driving contest, and asks his boss for a 9lb. hammer, saying that if he has a good hammer he can beat the steam drill driving.

The lyric describes the contest:

John Henry driving on the right-hand side,
Steam drill driving on the left,
Says, 'fore I'll let your steam drill beat me down
I'll hammer my fool self to death.
Hammer my fool self to death.
John Henry told his Captain
When you go to town
Please bring me back a nine-pound hammer
And I'll drive your steel on down.
And I'll drive your steel on down.
John Henry told his Captain,
Man ain't nothin' but a man,
And 'fore I'll let the steam drill beat me down
I'll die with this hammer in my hand,
Die with this hammer in my hand.
Now the man that invented the steam drill,
Thought he was mighty fine.
John Henry drove his fifteen feet,
And the steam drill only made nine.
Lawd, the steam drill only made nine.
John Henry was hammerin' on the mountain,
And his hammer was strikin' fire.
He drove so hard till he broke his poor heart,
Then he laid down his hammer an' he died.
Lawd, he laid down his hammer an' he died.

Alistair Cooke sadly bemoans the fact that once Bing Crosby sings "*Home on the Range*" it ceases to be a folk song.

This is not the case with the Brunswick recording of "John Henry" by *The Spencer Trio*, which consists of Billy Kyle, piano; Buster Bailey, clarinet, and O'Neil Spencer, drums and vocal, because "John Henry" is one of the most tuneful of all work songs, so it curbs the desire of the performer to make those slight melodic changes (almost unconsciously at times) that makes it easier for Mrs. Joe Listener, who has been brought up on a diet of "The Little Boy that Santa Claus Forgot" and "When the Mighty Organ Played Oh, Promise Me", to understand.

O'Neil Spencer uses no vocal tricks in recounting the saga of John Henry. He might have sung a few more verses, but that's only a slight quibble.

On the other side of the record, the Spencer Trio swing softly into "*Afternoon in Africa*" which proves to be the exact opposite of its pretentious title. Definitely a record to have. The number is Brunswick 02632–A.

* * *

CURRENT vocal sensation in America to-day is little coloured girl, Maxine Sullivan, who rode high to fame when she came swinging through the rye with her low down versions of famed Scotch ballads, "Loch Lomond" and "Annie Laurie".

It all started when she was playing piano with an unknown jazz band in Pittsburgh. One night the leader asked shy Maxine if she'd sing a chorus of Joyce Kilmer's famous dirge, "Trees."

"Only God can make a lil 'ole tree", Maxine sang softly, stressing a subtle rhythm that suggested swing without the sand blasting.

The audience didn't like it at first, but suddenly caught on to what the kid was getting at and from that moment the little blackbird was made.

Maxine Sullivan has no phonograph at her snug flat high up on Sugar Hill in Harlem. She doesn't know one swing record from another, her whole life being wrapped up in the songs she sings and singing.

She's recently added, "It Was a Lover and His Lass" to her repertoire, and would like to do "Roamin' in the gloamin' " if Sir Harry Lauder would give her permission. She feels sure he would if he heard her sing it just once.

At long last Maxine Sullivan heeds the call of Harlem and sings the weariest, and most stirring of all blues—"The St. Louis Blues", in her newest H.M.V. recording B. 8789.

She sings it as only Harlem can—till the stars go out and the tune is pounding around in your head.

Last month I wrote in this magazine that W. C. Handy didn't write "The St. Louis Blues". It's a story I've heard many times in America and believed.

In the September issue of the Chicago musician's paper, "Down Beat", W. C. Handy, grand o'd Father of the Blues, defends himself on this and many other points connected with the origin of jazz. After reading this article I'm convinced that his claims are right and just, and I take pleasure in withdrawing my misinformed words.

* * *

SLOWLY but surely, top flight bands seem to be swinging back to melody. Quite a large proportion of this month's swing records are based on catchy melodies, instead of being sadly reminiscent of "Christopher Columbus":

Eddie South (*Violin solo*). "Eddie's Blues"; "Sweet Georgia Brown" (H.M.V. B.8778).

This comes out of the H.M.V. September catalogue, but it is so outstanding that I feel I have to include it in the October review. Very few negroes take up the fiddle successfully and there are few really great jazz fiddle players anyway. Eddie South is not only the greatest jazz fiddle player, black or white, but also one of the most thrilling players you have ever heard—straight or jazz. Accompanying him on both sides is that colossal swing technician of the guitar, Django Reinhardt.

Dicky Wells and His Orchestra. "Bugle Call Rag"; "The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" (H.M.V. B.8799).

Who said they couldn't record swing music in Europe? This pick-up band led by swell trombonist, Dicky Wells, with Europe's No. 1 trumpeter, Bill Coleman, and a bunch of boys from Teddy Hill's band which played in "The Cotton Club" show at the Palladium this year (remember?), recorded these two sides in Paris and the result is far better than the average American counterpart. The orchestration for "Devil and the Deep" is the same used by Teddy Hill to accompany those tap-dancing fools, the Berry Bros., in their act.

Count Basie and His Orchestra. "Sent for You Yesterday and Here You Come To-day"; "Swinging the Blues" (Brunswick 02619-B).

The newest aristocrat of swing offers two numbers typical of the band. "Sent for You Yesterday", a composition by the leader, is the best side, with Basie really giving out on piano and some fine tenor sax work by Lester Young. The other side is based on a well-worn riff out of an old Don Redman tune called "Hot and Anxious" and keeps giving you the impression that you've heard it all before.

Lionel Hampton and His Orchestra. "Piano Stomp"; "Drum Stomp" (H.M.V. B8800).

Perspiring showman, Lionel Hampton, who, like killer-diller drummer Gene Krupa, is viewed by the swing die-hards with artistic suspicion, plays a mess of horse's teeth and plenty of drums in place of his usual vibraphone, with a hand-picked band from Benny Goodman's orchestra. Discovered by B. G. leading a small band in a negro dance hall in Los Angeles, Hampton was whisked East to be the first coloured swing star featured publicly with a white band.

Benny Goodman and His Orchestra. "Wrappin' It Up"; "Big John Special" (H.M.V. B8798).

Stocky, Jewish Benny Goodman, America's King of Swing, who has been playing this kind of music since he was a kid in short pants hanging around the Mississippi river boats, guides his 1938 stream-lined band through two typical modern numbers. Songwriter, Irving Berlin, has prophesied that swing will die a natural death inside two years, but swing—which represents the very best in jazz—has been going for nearly thirty years and survived many similar statements by people who condemn it because they don't understand it.

Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra. "You Can't Stop Me from Dreaming"; "Mon Homme" (Vocalion Swing Series S. 186-B).

Billie Holiday, the Spencer Tracy of swing music, succeeds in making "My Man" sound like a cry from the heart instead of just another French song in still another French revue. A killer diller tempo—main weakness of most swing bands to-day—spoils the other side and blots the copy book of sensitive pianist, Teddy Wilson, famous for his good musical taste.

Bob Crosby and His Orchestra. "Grand Terrace Rhythm"; "At the Jazz Band Ball" (Decca F.6754).

One of those rarities—a white band that meets the negro musician on his own ground. Deliberately playing in the old Dixieland marching groove, Bing's brother Bob leads one of the most refreshing bands in jazz to-day. "Jazz Band Ball" is featured in the recent short this band made for Paramount. Fletcher Henderson wrote and recorded "Grand Terrace Rhythm" ten years ago, and the new recording has faithfully retained all the genius of the original.

Hot Lips Page and His Orchestra. "Down on the Levee"; "Old Man Ben" (Vocalion Swing Series S.197-A).

Not everybody's meat, but the real thing in low down twelve-bar blues. Trumpeter "Lips" Page blows 'em high, wide and handsome strictly in the Louis Armstrong tradition, and sings such engaging lyrics as: "Head like a monkey . . . feet like a bear . . . mouth full of tobacco juice . . . squirtin' it everywhere!" in an off key voice that would sound just right around three in the morning with a load aboard.

Coleman Hawkins and Freddy Johnson. "Star Dust"; "Well, All Right Then!" (Vocalion S.123-A).

Ask any swing musician who the greatest tenor sax player in the world is and he's bound to reply "The Hawk". With a head full of dreams and a tone that makes straight musicians shudder, the Hawk will get you if you don't watch out and then you'll start collecting everything he's ever played on.

"Star Dust" is a marihuana dream of Hoagey Carmichael's and "All Right then!" is a typical expression used by a swing musician as he feels himself being sent by the music.

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NINO MARTINI'S WEDDING . . .

a letter from Venice

NEITHER the splendour of the Scaligere Tombs nor the vicinity of Lake Guarda's enchanting banks are sufficient attraction for intensive tourism, and Verona remains a provincial, dignified town. A peaceful Austrian atmosphere seems to prevail even though Austrian rule only lasted fifty-two years and the Austrian barracks are crumbling down into a belt of uninteresting ruins.

But for a few weeks every year Verona has to play its part in the Fascists' drive to intensify the tourist traffic. The arena, "the best preserved Roman arena in the world", is used for an opera season. And during my holidays I went there like many others. The audiences there are as beautiful to watch as the spectacles themselves. During the long intervals, which might be exceedingly dreary, while ponderous sets are painfully carried by hand, there suddenly emerges, all around you, a most vivid and impressive vision of a Roman crowd. It is certainly better than the painfully reconstructed efforts of *Ben Hur* or *Scipione l'Africano.*

But opera has its own rights, and when, during the last act of "La Favorita" the real moon came out in the melodramatic sky, behind the dimly lit set of the cloister, the crowd was so still and so moved that one could hear the short breathing of the dying operatic star trying to make everybody forget her round figure in a brave effort to die a romantic death. . . .

Those are certainly "circenses" in the best sense of the word.

After the show I went like all my fellow tourists to my hotel, the "Colomba d'Oro", to get a well-deserved rest. I had, in the afternoon made the most exhausting visit to the Scaligere Castle trying with great conviction to look at as many good pictures as I could in its innumerable succession of halls, full as they are.

The opera season was nearing its end. One could already feel the town getting back to its own quiet life. Deals in wine from the rich land around, and a "peach-fair" which, like everything else in Italy, seemed to be an excuse to sing "Giovinnezza", the poorest amongst their songs. Next morning we set out early to finish our tour. There is the theatre, and the cathedral still to see.

There is also, of course, Juliet's tomb. The same nineteenth-century inspiration that drove Prince Albert to design the Scottish tartans and some less famous Frenchman to imagine for the Bretons their "picturesque" or "quaint" costumes, picked up somewhere this heavy Roman sarcophagus and brought it to a cave near the "very convent where Friar Lawrence lived".

The affluence of English and American tourists, composed, I imagine, mostly of spinsters, provided the means of restoring the old and, alas, rather indifferent cloister and of installing some electric lamps in the cave th

(*Continued on page* 275)

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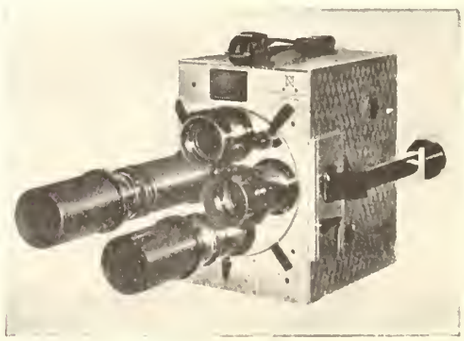

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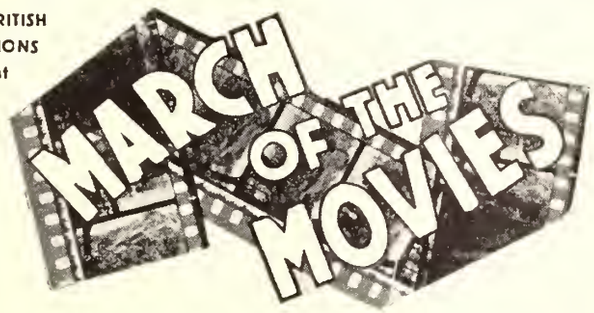
AT LONG LAST -

A SCREEN OUTLINE OF FILM HISTORY

ARGYLE BRITISH PRODUCTIONS present



THE STORY OF MOTION PICTURES — THEIR BIRTH AND GROWTH FROM THE THAUMATROPE TO MODERN SUPER PRODUCTIONS

FASCINATING —
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PRODUCED BY SHOWMEN FOR SHOWMEN

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Compiled & Edited by HOWARD GAYE

P. L. Mannock, *Daily Herald*, says:

"Film sentimentalists will love this interesting survey of the past . . . I cannot imagine any audience failing to find fascination in this compilation."

Released by A.B.P.C.

Nino Martini's Wedding—*cont.*

give to the tomb "the most suitable scenic effect".

By twelve o'clock the very promising spaghetti was waiting at the "Golden Dove" and we rushed there expecting a quiet meal, followed by a reasonable siesta.

A surprise was waiting there: Verona's local boy who made good, Nino Martini, was having his wedding-lunch.

I COULD have a good look at him sitting contentedly by his home-made bride, behind huge bunches of suitable white flowers, very respectable indeed in his best clothes and perhaps a trifle bourgeois looking.

Outside a few zealous Fascists in uniform tried hard to get busy and take a prominent part in the event. Some ordered about the few modest cars of the local guests. Others, belonging to a kind of sect called G.U.F. took 9 mm. shots of the proceedings.

The Hollywood glamour girls didn't succeed after all in making the local boy forget his girl although she didn't possess half as much "yumph". A small but rightly appreciative audience gathered outside the hotel: a few girls, a few more children. It was all very intimate and in keeping with such a sensible matrimonial scheme. With good latin restraint they didn't cheer or applaud when bride and bridegroom entered their nuptial car. Odd luggage, hastily loaded by casual porters and a few presents hastily re-packed . . . Honeymoon begins for a star. . .

But Hollywood film people and press agents don't miss such good opportunities! Telegrams, dozens of them, handled by harassed and ragged messengers, kept pouring into the "Colomba d'Oro" long after the couple had left. "Congratulations Nino".

We had to hurry to catch a train. Another film event was to be witnessed by us at the Lido! "The Venice Film Festival." Something funny this time.

Nothing as intimate as Nino Martini's wedding, but serious official stuff. At the Excelsior, Sabu attending the British Gala Dinner.

And now being back at work, I see that Leslie Howard got half a prize for his acting. It is certainly nobody's fault if he got anything at all.

A. De C.

FILM GUIDE

NOTE: *Owing to the enormous number of bookings for short films we have been compelled to omit our usual Shorts Film Guide. So great is the success of Strand's 'Zoo Films', and the G.P.O.'s 'North Sea' that it would need seven or eight of our pages to give the October bookings for these films alone. Interested readers can obtain bookings by writing to us.*

COCKA

Written by

Snooks' Probe

The kiddies are in the news just now. Commissions and conferences are debating the effect of films on those of tender years. Greybeards who have never seen a film since Ponting lectured at the Philharmonic Hall ("Films were *Films* then, Sir") mumble their platitudes from the Bench and all (as old Chas. Dickens remarked) is gas and gaiters.

The Cockalorum editor, who still has a spark of decency left in his gin-sodden Psyche, has instituted his own first-hand investigation of this vital subject, and has entrusted it to his ace reporter, Snooks ("Sans Peur et sans Reproche") Greiser.

A few interviews with leading tots (apart from those whose butlers or buddies Snooks failed to bribe) are the first fruits of this soul-stirring probe.

Master Ffolliot Ffoljambe, aged 9, *of Mayfair.* "I only go to see Freddie Bartholomew. My aunt likes him. Besides, there's always a pretty good chance of seeing Mickey Rooney give him a poke in the snoot." (At this point the major-domo intervened.)

Doris Phlop, aged 11, *of Tooting.* "I *love* Carole Lombard, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Deanna Durbin, Kay Francis, Ginger Rogers, Dorothy Lamour and Charles Laughton."

Snitch Jenks, age 14, *of Hoxton.* "Katherine Hepburn is the only woman in my life."

The Right Rev. the Bishop of Much Tutting, aged 85. "To me the cinema is a shrine for the innocent girlhood of Shirley Temple and Jane Withers."

(Ed.: "Ought the Bishop to be in this?"
Snooks: "Second childhood, you mutt."
Ed.: "Okay, okay, I only asked.")

LAMENT

Laurel and Hardy
were the life of the pardy
They had finer witz
than the brothers Ritz
and were more to be enjoyd
than Harold Lloyd
and were just as good larx
as the Brothers Marx
and made Our Gang
look like an also rang
Wherefore we reproach
Hal Roach
and Laurel
for their quarrel
and we feel that Ollie
can never be so jolly
a man
without Stan.

OBITER DICTUM

The film is now catering for the same vulgar unimaginative millions for whom the B.B.C. caters.

S. P. B. Mais

Women who captivate the most sought-after males do not conceal the fact that they are mentally far above the average.

George Brent

Smack in the Eye from Alexander Pope
"Ye little stars, hide your diminished rays!"

They're Open!

We're Class, we are

Here we are, the Girton Girls,
With red flannel bloomers and cultured pearls,
We have funny ways
With our pince nez
We prate of Freud
and are never annoyed
by an offer of Tea
with a Wrangler-to-be
and never averse
to uncensored (or worse)
plays from the Slav
For all of us have
the same object in life—
to end up as the wife
of a handsome Adonis—
so pack up you phonies,
who think that a perm
will entangle the worm
For here we are the Girton Girls
With red flannel bloomers and cultured pearls.
Looks we despise
We're all very wise
and all of us speak
the best Latin and Greek
and we know that the soul
is worth two of that mole
on the left shoulder-blade
of the prettiest maid.
So pack up, you flappers
you chocolate box wrappers,
and cede pride of place
to the really quaite nace
virgins of virtue
(Spengler can't hurt you)
and allow that our knowledge
(all paid for at college)
Will hook a Clark Gable—
and that's more than you're able.
So here we go, the Girton Girls
With red flannel bloomers and cultured pearls.

Hurrah for Hoke!

Good old hoke,
It really is a joke,
The loving way they lap it up,
The movie-going folk.
Give 'em ham,
And they don't give a damn—
Just serve the mob a corney job
And watch the tunstiles jam.

For satire is a flat tyre
And subtlety, it stinks:
Intelligence a grave offence,
Reality a jinx.
Bring on your hammy Mammy,
Your Blonde, your Boy, your Sin
They're old, we know, but so B.O.
They always *pack 'em in.*

(*Continued in col. one of next page*)

LORUM

Carlos Marsden

"Standing room at 3/6— this way please"

HOT NEWS

Two professors have succeeded in boiling an egg merely by subjecting it to intense sound.

While only too anxious to avoid the more obvious wisecracks, we would like to suggest that enterprising managers might serve raw Hamburgers to their patrons during Joe E. Brown films.

* * *

The Hollywood version of "Wuthering Heights" is to be called *Wuthering Heights*, announces the *Times*. It must be based on that Brontë novel—you know—the one where Fredric March strangles the polar bear.

POLICE SEEK
EXOTIC WOMAN
—Newspaper Headline.

What makes them think they're exceptions?

Hurrah for Hoke!

(*Continued from previous page*)

You'll observe
That no one has the nerve
To dish 'em out a pic. without
A lavish load of Lurve.
Though it tells
Of war and blood and shells
Behind the bomb effects there waits
A guy with wedding bells.

For satire is a flat tyre,
Finesse a total loss,
What isn't slop is just a flop
Where Box Office is boss.
Uncork the same old hokum
The public thirst to quench—
A flash of wit, a subtle bit?—
Aw, leave that to the French.

JAM ON IT

The roadway outside the Houses of Parliament was strewn inches thick with jam when hundreds of jars fell from a passing lorry.

A party of Socialist M.P.'s were soon on the scene, picking out the raspberries for presentation to Mr. Chamberlain.

"What—no elephants?"

No patients and bills mounting. Dr. Manson finds a mining village practice hard going.

" You can't expect no fancy cooking here."

The rescue party on its way, Dr. Manso leading them round a disused shaft.

THE CITADEL

Eagerly awaited film of Dr. Cronin's famous book is nearing completion. Robert Donat and Rosalind Russell discuss their parts.

WHEN Robert Donat was given the chance to play the part of the doctor in Cronin's *The Citadel*, he welcomed it as an opportunity to get away from romantic parts to something real, a modern British story.

"I saw in it a chance to do a real character study, and for three weeks without a break I worked and liked it because I felt there was something real in it", he said. It is the first large production of a modern story set in this country, and he hopes that it will lead the way to many more films of British people of to-day.

The story has been done conscientiously as far as the censor will allow, Mr. Donat thinks. The background is true, the Welsh miners and their wives are faithfully portrayed, the heroine really wore the clothes of a country doctor's wife. "I was allowed to be rough, brusque, a bit of a bumpkin treading on everyone's toes, and there was no attempt to make me look romantic and pull a curl down over my forehead", he said. "I was in Wales for three days, and went into the miners' homes to see how they live. I saw a surgery the like of which I would not have believed existed."

Mr. Donat believes this film has put some real people on the screen without compromise. The atmosphere of the distressed areas of Wales is there, the miners with their pitiful diseases and narrow lives, the doctor in his struggle against poverty, ignorance and prejudice.

Taking the doctor as an individual facing his own problems, he saw in him a blundering young fool, with high ideals, generous heart and rough Scots exterior, who, if he had not been essentially weak in some spot or other, in spite of all social evils, and red tape handicaps, would have won through to his idealistic goal. "The problem was, as I saw it," he said, "Dr. Manson's personal problem, which, if attacked by someone with more personal charm, might have been easily overcome."

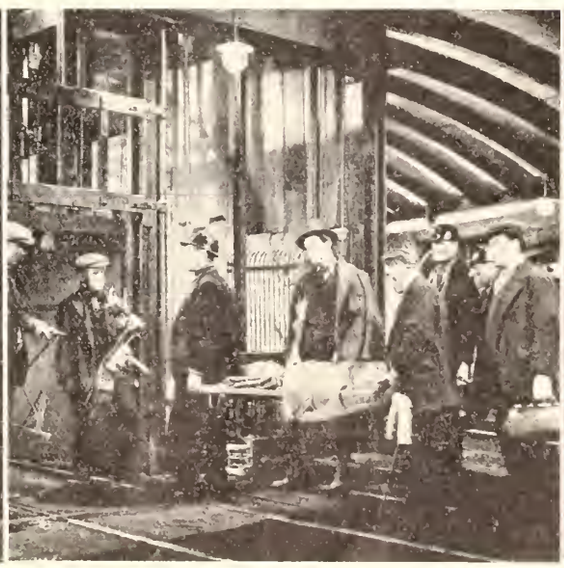
It is thought that one part where there is some doubt of the censor is a scene where the young doctor has brought a child into the world, discovers the child is lifeless, and, working until the sweat drops off his brow and the room goes black before his eyes, he brings life into the child's choked lungs by plunging it from hot to cold water.

"Having taken the young doctor, and presented his struggle first as a love story second as a struggle against many difficulties in the way of red tape and lack of money, I followed the character portrayal through to the degradation of the doctor to bring him to life again when he returns to all his old principles.

"I hope to have many other chances to do real character studies in good British pictures", said Mr. Donat. "I would rather play to an original script, but have no particular subject in mind at the moment. If I had my choice of novels, I would choose *Precious Bane* by Mary Webb."

MISS ROSALIND RUSSELL plays the principal female character in the book—Christine, the doctor's wife. Miss Russell, who has come from Hollywood to take this part, is not English but her accent is not obtrusively American, and she is generally regarded by audiences as the "English type". Interviewed on the part she plays Miss Russell described it as the characterisation of a good wife. She thought that Christine was not so much interested in the moral issues of the doctor's career as in the well-being of the doctor himself. The matrimonial difficulties which the two had when Manson became wealthy were due not to the fact that Christine did not take kindly to luxuries, Miss Russell thought, but they were due to her recognition of the fact that the denials of his ideals was causing the doctor unhappiness. As a good wife, therefore, she was anxious that the doctor should return to his ideals and so gain ease of mind. Discussing this issue in a matter-of-fact way Miss Russell insisted that any normal wife would be glad to share in a man's prosperity, and Christine was essentially a normal person.

The doctor reaches the trapped miner and decides that the only way to free him is to amputate his arm.



The wounded miner is brought to the surface by the rescue gang.

"They told me you wouldn't come back." The doctor's young wife greets him on his return.

Television

THE *Radio Times* is a well illustrated journal. Even the announcers have their photographs reproduced. While these bring a certain decoration to the page, I am thinking rather of those excellent if modest montages which set the atmosphere for a talk of a feature programme. When someone is speaking on London a montage of St. Paul's, the Tower and the Houses of Parliament is laced together with the stringing lights of the Embankment. Very often these photographic images eke out the imperfection of mere words. Sometimes the speaker is insetted. The features of S. P. B. Mais set against the Coast of England helped many a listener to enjoy both Mr. Mais and his account of his travels.

Television, too, gives talks. These are of several kinds. There is the lecture, the interview and a delightfully informal broadcast called "Speaking Personally." In the latter a number of well-known broadcasters have spoken. The latest I heard and saw was Mr. Raymond Gram Swing, who has built up an astonishingly large audience in this country with his weekly talks from America. Mr. Swing has one of the best radio voices in two continents. He has an individual intimacy which is winning, and I am glad to report that Mr. Swing has a face which is just as honestly expressive as his voice. Radio has its own brand of It, and Mr. Swing has It. He spoke of New York and three men. In ten minutes he painted as real a picture of the cosmopolitan character of New York as one could hope for, and he also gave word pictures of Mayor La Guardia, Mr. Dewey and Mr. Moses. His pithy sentences conjured up pictures of their problems and their achievements and by a verbal sleight of hand he etched the deportment of these three gentlemen. In all of the ten minutes he talked, Mr. Swing's face was expressive—much more expressive than a picture in the *Radio Times*. But neither the *Radio Times* nor Mr. Swing nor the television producer had an actual picture of Mayor La Guardia, New York City, Jones Beach or the Triborough Bridge. Now I immediately absolve the *Radio Times* and I also absolve Mr. Swing, but I do suggest that the producer of Mr. Swing's talk might have cut in some illustrations.

Had the producer merely asked Mr. Swing to hold up a few postcards or the front page of New York's *Daily News* he would have made the talk as real as Mr. Swing could make it in one's own drawing-room. I have no doubt that if Mr. Swing's talk is reproduced in *The Listener*, the Editor will make use of some such illustrations. Had the producer cut in a few lantern slides he would only have been doing what the Women's Guild have done for the Vicar over the last fifty years. Had the producer cut in some film shots of New York City, of Mr. Dewey, Mr. Moses and Mayor La Guardia, he would have been doing no more than every listener expected. But I do not suppose there was a producer anyway. So one of the best talks

Marcel Boulestin giving a Cookery Lesson—from "And Now."

remained just one of the best talks and Mr. Swing's face one of the best faces, but the broadcast did not even start to be television. This is serious. I suggest that the B.B.C. invite someone with the most repulsive features in Christendom to broadcast a talk on schoolgirl complexion, and see if that will shock their producers into thinking up an alternative image to the speaker's face.

THE most spectacular and probably the most important item at Olympia was not broadcast. This was the get-together of Government, Trade and B.B.C. to discuss the present position and the immediate future of Television. This is a useful precedent which posited some stability to the market situation of receivers. It is also a significant precedent that this united front should speak to the public in no uncertain terms of the future of the television service.

Radiolympia reaffirmed a number of things. First it reaffirmed a wide public interest. Television was the hit of the show. The public were shown that television really has a lot to offer when it tries. Take it on no higher a level than "S.S. Sunshine." This was excellent. It had all the scope and efficiency of a Vitaphone short and on a big set the camera work showed up well. This kind of programme is bound to be the clockwork of television. Something even more interesting was proved and that was the success of what the United States broadcaster calls the "ad lib" programme. Here people from the audience were interviewed without preparation and contrary to all forecasts those who stepped out of the crowd spoke well. They were spontaneous, unaffected, witty and alive. This further proved that television can outpace "In Town To-night" any time it chooses. That certain desperation which attends the lack of script has a life of its own. Radiolympia also demonstrated that the cheap set is no myth. Long heralded the tide has turned and the cheap set is here, displaying astounding efficiency.

PICTURE PAGE is back again. This programme is a seeming veteran with its 150 odd shows. In the heart of these programmes you will find most of the experiments which are likely to set the canon of television. Here the interview technique is being slowly worked out. There have been attempts at illustration. Cartoonists have shown their work; artists have talked about pictures and explorers have shown their trophies. Here and there the paraphernalia of the speaker has allowed him to contribute an item which has been as purely televisional as any critic could wish. This programme might, with advantage to the others which follow, experiment with lighting.

The quality of drama is speedily improving. This has been largely due to the imagination of Fred O'Donovan and Moultrie Kelsall. I can imagine that good dramatic material is not easily come by, but both these men have brought some distinction to one or two very ordinary plays by their imaginative handling and excellent camera control. One day a genius is going to make television sit up and do things. Right now it is still playing the tunes of the theatre, the cinema and the B.B.C. One day it must play its own tune and make its own sweet music. It is ready for a Méliès, a Griffith or a Pudovkin.

THE B.B.C. have just issued a pamphlet reviewing the first year's work on television. It is entitled *And Now* and, after a glance at the galaxy of names, one feels it might equally appropriately have been called *And How*. The list of outside broadcasts includes the Coronation Procession, the Test Matches, Trooping the Colour, the Cup Final, the Olympia Circus, the Boat Race, the Zoo and twice as many again attractive items. It lists the stars of the entertainment world, the Chevaliers, the Fields, the Matthews, the Robeys, the Roys to such a dizzy length that some celestial variety bill is suggested. The drama department lists its amazing selection—*Alice in Wonderland*, *Androcles and the Lion*, *Emperor Jones*, *Ghosts*, Shakespeare, Sheriff and Shaw, Coward, Capek and Kennedy—some fifty top-liners and the actors include some sixty leading lights of the West End. Picture page claims a dazzling array of over a hundred celebrity interviews. From Popeye to Priestley, and Fokine to Foord. Music and Ballet are reviewed as one and it is a pity that this very handsome booklet cannot suggest the super-excellence of the television department's reproduction of music, which has to be heard to be believed.

Thomas Baird

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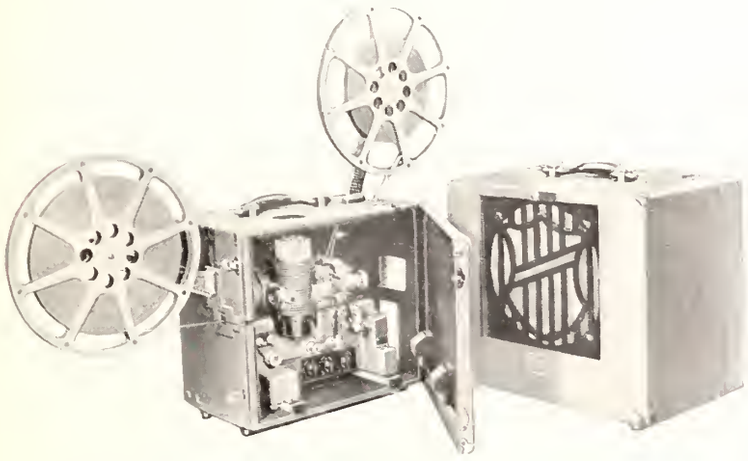

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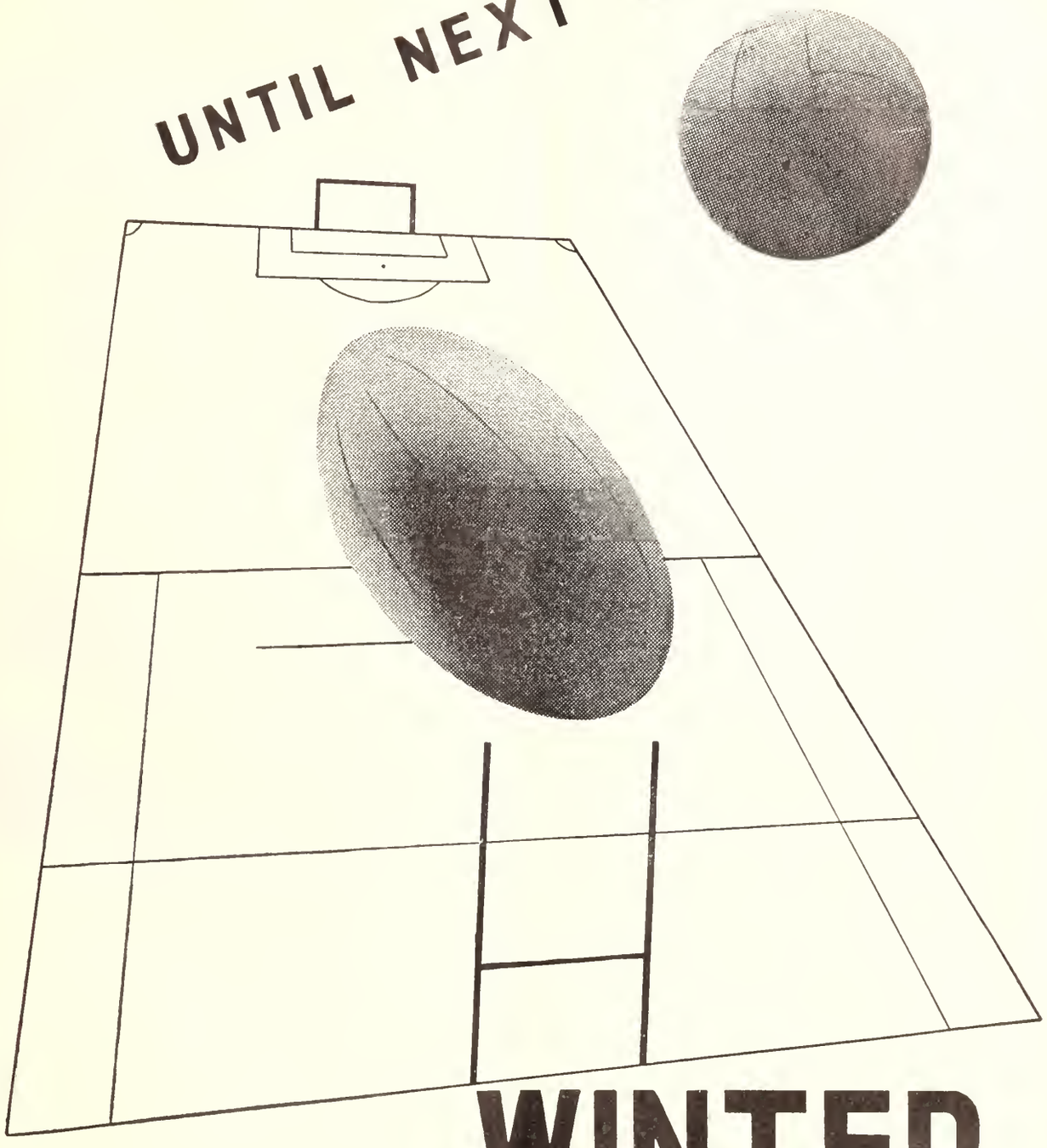

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SEE

NOVEMBER 1938
Vol. 3 No. 7

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover Still: Mary Maguire: *nineteen year old film actress. Recent films include: "One Hour of Romance", "Confusion", "Alcatraz Island" and "The Outsider". Now working on "Black Eyes" at Elstree for A.B.P.C.*

Truck Driver with Clarinet: by *Martin Coffyn* 284, 285

Mickey Rooney: by *Robert Blees* 286, 287

Too Hot to Handle: by *Glen Norris* 288, 289

The Other Woman: by *Mary Elwyn* 290, 291

The Attic of Terror: by *Floyd Gibbons* 292, 293

The Polities of Sixty Glorious Years: *Anon.* 294, 295

Americans at Work: by *Gilbert Seldes* 296, 297, 298, 299

Desert Fastness: by *Ronald Strode* 300, 301

Come out Fighting: by *Stan Patchett* 302, 303

Censorship: by *John Grierson* 304, 305

Fear: by *Richard Ford* 306, 307, 309

Films Reviewed: by *Basil Wright* and *Marion Fraser* . . . 310, 311

In the Balance: Edited by *H. E. Blyth* 312, 313, 314, 315

Scottish Testament: by *Ritchie Calder* 316, 317

Cockalorum 318, 319

Garbo on Sundays: by *Russell Ferguson* 320

Culture with Can-Can: by *S. E. R. Wynne* 321

Gramophone Records Reviewed: by *Stan Patchett* 323, 324

Book Reviews 324

OPINION

The censorship that seeks to prevent honest pictures of Britain: the alleged bias of newsreel treatment of the Munich Agreement: and the entire political reference of the cinema to-day, are matters of grave public concern and the attention of our readers is especially drawn to the articles on pages 294–295 and 304–305 of this number.

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TRUCK-DRIVER WITH CLARINET

by Martin Coffyn

"He can do more with that black stick than a monkey can do with a cocoanut . ." is how 'Fats' Waller speaks of band leader Joe Marsala.

WE'RE in a large, high-ceilinged room full of tables and chairs, but our eyes go to an enormous, oval bar which occupies the centre of the room and then immediately to the phenomenon which has brought us, with hundreds of others, to the Hickory House this afternoon.

For in the centre of the bar, on a raised platform, stands smiling, handsome Joe Marsala with his clarinet and as he waves to greet us, the six members of his band are starting to ride out on *Muskrat Ramble*, that classic of early jazz.

We take our seats at the bar and soon Joe is going to town on his clarinet in a long, flowing rhythm that has us beating time with our feet on the bar rail. Now the tenor sax is taking a chorus—then the bass fiddle beats out a soft, throaty rhythm, and finally the whole band takes the melody off into a jungle chant that has the "alligators" jumping up and down in their chairs.

Now it's *Hot String Beans*, and look—that's the famous Tommy Dorsey who's getting up from his seat to sit in with the band—and will we have music! But wait—here comes Gene Krupa too!

This is Swing Heaven—and soon we're listening to such inspired improvisation that even the angels are probably flapping their wings in time to the down beat of this unearthly music.

We move over to a table near the bar and

Adele Girard

join "Fats" Waller and Duke Ellington, two more of the famous musicians who regularly drop in on Joe Marsala's Sunday afternoon jam sessions.

"He can do more with that black stick than a monkey can do with a cocoanut," says "Fats", and we know just what he means as Joe tilts his clarinet towards the stars and the sobbing tremolo of his rhythm reaches right out into our very souls.

But now the jam session pauses for a while and we go over to a table in the rear where Joe comes over to join us for the interval. Let's ask this virtuoso of the clarinet some questions and find out why he has become known as a "musician's musician", for when one musician praises another, that's news—and praise indeed. And regularly, every Sunday, we can find not only the band leaders mentioned, but such other top-ranking musicians as Bobby Hackett, Pee Wee Hunt, Glen Gray, Artie Shaw, and Willie (The Lion) Smith.

"WELL," says Joe, "I was born in Chicago and started learning the saxophone when I was ten years old. One day I hit a sharp instead of a flat while I was playing *Ave Maria* for my teacher and he was so disgusted with me that I became depressed and sold my horn.

"I had to go to work in 1920, driving a truck, but my brother Marty was playing in a small band in the style of the old Dixieland Jazz Band, and one night the clarinet player got married and left the band. That was my chance and I jumped into his place almost before I could play the instrument, and I took lessons on the side of Clarence Warmelin of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

"We played speakeasies, clubs, smokers, and any other dates we could get for several years. I went to Milwaukee for a short time in 1928, and then back to Chicago in 1929 where I came of age and joined the union and played with a succession of bands.

"In 1933, Jack Teagarden, Wingy Mannone and I, with several others, organised a small swing band and got a job playing on a roof speakeasy just outside the entrance of the Chicago World's Fair.

"We played in what is now known as 'Chicago Style', a sort of indefinable free-and-easy improvisation—and I guess that's what started all the musicians in town coming over to our place after they'd finished their regular work.

"Well, there were lots of moves after that—Florida, Palm Beach and Miami in the winter—and an unforgetable season on the road with Barnes and Carruthers' Rodeo Circus, where we had to play the 'Stars and Stripes forever' in swing tempo because none of the boys in the band could read music.

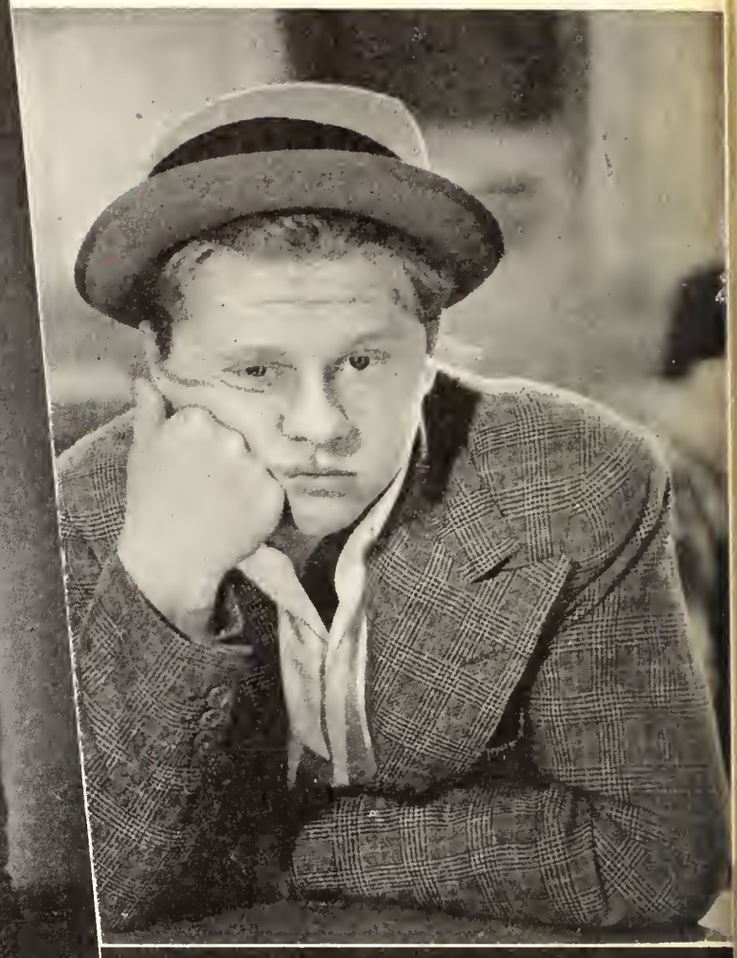
"Finally in 1935 I came to New York to join Wingy Mannone's band at Adrian's Tap Room, and from there I moved around a lot—with Louis Prima at the Famous Door—Red McKenzie at his own place—and with Riley and Farley (you remember 'The Music Goes Round and Round', don't you?) into the Hickory House.

"ON March 17th, 1937, I opened at the Hickory House with my own band, Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans, with Adele Girard playing a mean swing harp and doing the vocals. I started the Sunday afternoon jam sessions then and they've kept up ever since. On Sunday, January 8th, Mr. Felix Greene of the B.B.C. arranged for an international broadcast of one of our sessions and Alistair Cooke introduced our band to British listeners.

"I think there's going to be another on November 5th, and I really hope that I can take my band to London someday, so that I can show British swing fans the kind of music that I love."

But Joe has to stop now; he says goodbye to us—for it's time to go back on to that dais in the middle of the bar, pick up his "stick" and raise it into the air.

Hold it—alligators—Joe Marsala, that musician among musicians, is getting into the groove with a solid sender and we're going to ride out high, wide and handsome—so hold on tight with your hands and beat that rhythm out with all that's in you.



Mickey Rooney

Bob Blees writes about the tough young man whose acting has caused a deal of excitement lately.

TRACY-ROONEY Smash 17G in Prov. . . . *Boys' Town* Leads L. A. $32,300 . . . *Boys* Sock $29,000 . . . Tracy-Rooney Pace Indpls., $11,000 . . . *Town* Big $33,000 in N.Y. . . . *Variety*, this is, reporting the latest news of a little 17-year-old Irishman with a tendency to mug and a knack of bringing any and all kinds of people up to the ticket-wickets. The Rooney boom—and a boom it is in the States, with re-issues of The Hardy's and older Rooney *opera* a matter of course—is comparatively new. In fact, three pictures have made it, and Mickey with them. *Captains Courageous* began it, *Love Finds Andy Hardy* built it up, and *Boys' Town* parlayed the kid on to thousands of marquees and into an M.G.M. star-rating. Neither of which is tin, or hay, or peanuts, or to be sneezed at.

Whether the Rooney phenomenon is the result of a sudden desire on the part of the movie public to go back to its childhood, or a caprice that makes genuine ham acting a *sine qua non* of an enjoyable evening, is hard to say, but there it is. For Rooney's successes have given him the chance to be the lost 'teen-age of every man who might want it, of the too-swagger childhood hero—with a most unhandsome face—of every woman with a little imagination and an unwillingness to criticise lapses of manners.

Courageous let Mickey manœuvre his mug all over the screen, too, which is fine, because there are enough faces on screens that don't even make the attempt to look alive. After all, this may be the age of the heavily underlined. At any rate, Rooney is a hell of a lot more human than any other "boy actor" of the past ten years—even if the tears-cum-bathos of *Boys' Town* don't end up by being particularly sympathetic.

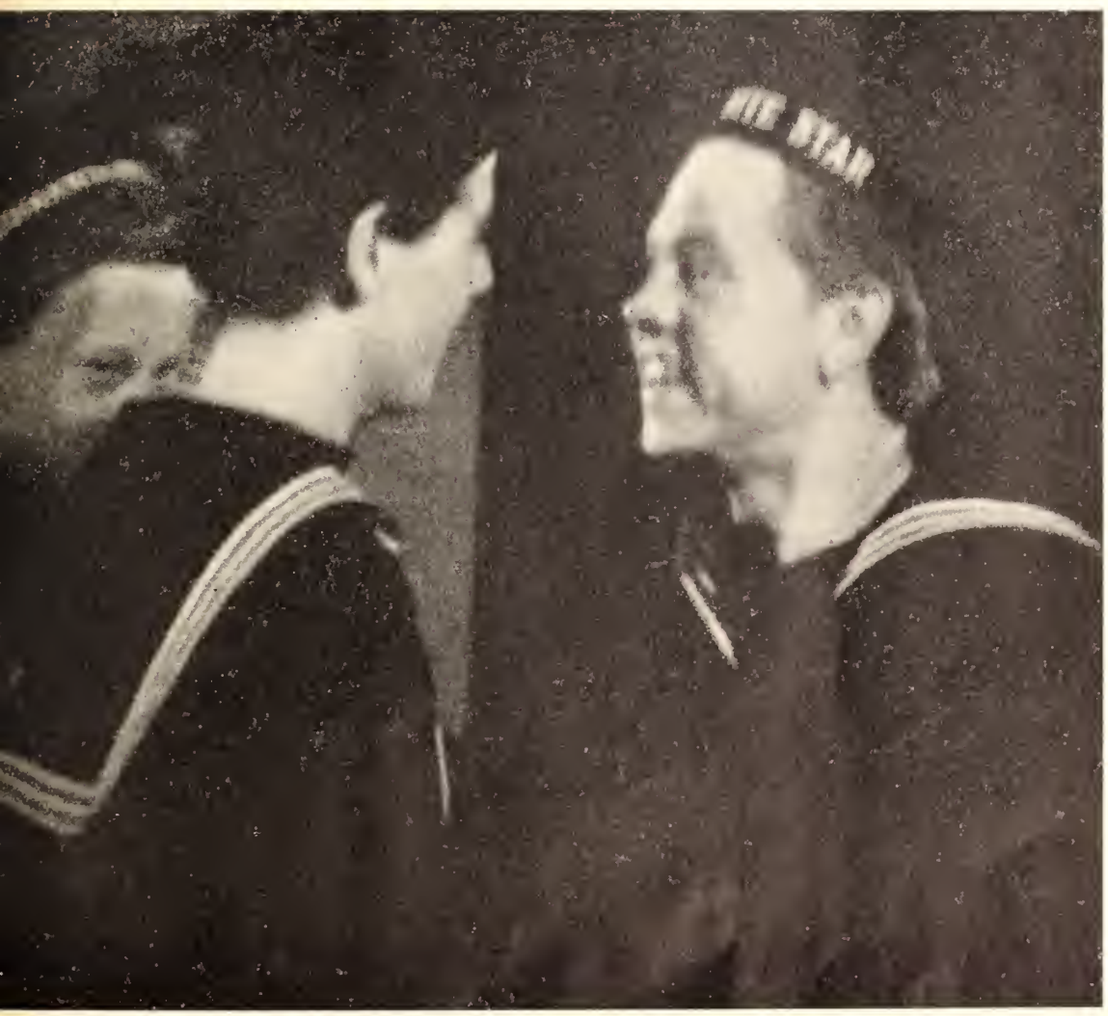
Rooney himself doesn't go for the "boy actor" designation. "Boy character actor" is his claim, and he sticks to it. And he has a professional background that justifies him. This Rooney boy, he would have you know, was on the stage at three years, when he toddled out from the wings and did imitations in his father's act. Then it was that his billing was Joe Yule, Jnr., which, oddly enough, is his real name. Three years after his debut, the Yules were out on the Coast, still doing their act, when Mervyn LeRoy, who hadn't even made *Public Enemy*, not to mention marrying the boss's daughter, signed little Joe for one picture. LeRoy doesn't remember the picture and hardly anyone else does, but Mickey still thinks about it, because he played a midget.

Hollywood held no objections to the Yules, and Junior got around in a series of comedies modelled not too subtly after Our Gang's. Eventually he starred in the "Mickey McGuire" two-reelers, based on the famous American comic-strip character. The idea was for Joe to change his name to Mickey McGuire, but there were legal complications, and instead he became Mickey Rooney, deemed Irish enough for the purpose.

Soon after, much to their later joy, Metro signed Master Rooney to a long-termer, and began shoving him into any empty spot that required a boy from ten to fifteen. *Manhattan Melodrama* was the first of these that meant very much, and then came *Hide-Out* and *Riff-Raff*. *Ah, Wilderness!* which sold Metro on the idea of a "family" series, was Mickey's first big break, and he followed it up with *The Devil Takes the Count*, the first of the Rooney-Bartholomew affiliation. *Courageous* introduced Mickey to Spencer Tracy and a more subdued style of acting, a style that the contingent who root for Rooney believe he could well combine with his own—and would, if mugging weren't almost as successful and twice as simple.

NONE too quickly for dying exhibitors after *Courageous* came the Hardy series, which raised havoc with play dates even on Broadway, when it was discovered that shopgirls and stenographers who had never been west of the Hudson were avoiding Crawford and Francis, plus wardrobes, in droves to see Rooney in little more than situations that come twice a week to most Mid-Western families. Wham after *Andy* came *Boys' Town*, which shot Mickey to stardom, and stardom, let it be known, with Tracy. Wham after *Boys' Town* comes *Stablemates*, with Wallace Beery; and then, *qui sait?* The chances are that Mickey will be more than merely 1938's shot in the arm that poops out in '39. Metro would seem to have on hand as valuable—and as unsuspected—a property as Universal's Darrieux, which is plenty valuable. It is doubtful if Rooney's legs are as attractive or if he speaks French, but he would think it only fair to bring out that he is California's Junior Tennis champion and that he did write a song that maybe the studio will buy.

Just lately Lejeune said that she hoped to see the day when Temple was playing Camille and Rooney was the Clark Gable of his day. We'll forego Shirley, but a few more years of Mickey could make us very happy. The way things look now, he'll have all the grooming he needs, and if he flops it'll be nobody's fault but his own. If he doesn't, which we're inclined to favour, the worst looking pan in the business will be breaking hearts all over the country.



The stills on these pages are from Mickey Rooney's two newest pictures.

Top left shows Mickey Rooney with Spencer Tracy in 'Boys' Town': Top right is from the popular Judge Hardy's Children series, and below two scenes from 'The Boy From Barnardo's.'

1. *Planes swoop over Shanghai. Chris Hunter (Clark Gable) dashes into the open to get pictures. In real life he would probably have been machine-gunned to bits.* 2. *A bomb just behind him flings him into a mud pool.*

3. *Getting out, he finds his camera burst open, his film ruined. Chris: "Well, I guess I don't live right." Left, his rival (Pidgeon). Right, his sound man (Carrillo).*

Much TOO HOT to HANDLE

GLEN NORRIS scoops the scoopers with an Inside Job on the M.G.M.-Clark Gable-Myrna Loy epic of the newsreel world, which has not been well received by newsreel men.

ONCE upon a time it was the Knights of the Round Table. Roaming the world with broadsword, white steed, and faithful retainer—shining armour hiding a heart of gold. They had their sagas and legends. They were a terror to villains—a menace to fair maidens. Each Maid Marion prayed that some day the villain might come . . . and then . . . just as hope seemed lost . . . the galloping steed . . . the clash of steel . . . the rescue. My hero!

Then it was B.B.C. Announcers. "Good-night everybody, Good-night"—and a million little sighs breathed off to sleep. But there was something wrong. The modern Knights-in-Boiled-Shirts hadn't all the ingredients. Where was the adventure—inside a padded studio? What! No dragons! Men of steel, who hushed at the flicker of a mere red light? Never! But worst of all, announcers didn't roam. They were stuck in one place. Not a chance of running into one just around the corner in the Brixton Road.

But now . . . the modern Maid Marion has found a race of men with everything. They roam the world, looking for trouble. Where there's war or disaster—they're there. They're tough—but their hearts are golden. At any moment, one may appear before a lovely lady, in the street, or in her bedroom . . . raise his hat . . . a little smile please . . . thank you. My hero! For broadsword, they carry a film camera; for steed, they ride the roof of a fast car; for faithful retainer, a little man holding a microphone. They are the newsreel cameramen—the eyes and ears, that bring the world to the world.

And what's more, their first saga has been written, their first legendary hero born. For *Too Hot to Handle* is simply the story of St. George—up-to-date. Its Knight is a newsreel cameraman: Sir Clark Gable. Its Damsel-in-Distress: Maid Myrna Loy. A story padded with love and hate, death and destruction, killers and kisses. But also a cautionary tale FOR newsreelmen BY newsreelmen.

The story was written by Len Hammond, on the staff of America's Movietone Newsreel, and Laurence Stallings, free-lance cameraman, roving war correspondent. First they picked a title: *Too Hot to Handle*. That may not mean much to little Audrey, but she should know, that, in the business, a story that's "too hot" is one that blows the gaff on somebody or something, that exposes a racket, or carries frankness almost to the point of libel. And maybe little Audrey would decide that isn't a bad description of *Too Hot to Handle*. For writers Hammond and Stallings have packed every foot of it solid with hokum, spoof, badanza. They have taken the newsreels' trousers down, laid bare a buttockful of riotous absurdity. To set the mood for their yarn, they might well have paraphrased the classic opening greeting of famed American Radio Gossip Walter Winchell: "Good evening Mr. and Mrs. Film Fan—and ALL ships at sea!" Like the rat-tat-tat rhythm of a Walter Winchell broadcast, their story crackles on:

FLASH . . . bombing planes and headlines over Shanghai . . . the world waits for news . . . for pictures . . . newsreel editors scream for more action . . . more thrills . . . more blood.

FLASH . . . Shanghai . . . newsreelmen wait for trouble . . . daredevil Chris Hunter . . . notsodaredevil Bill Dennis . . . they're covering the war . . . but they're not out for facts . . . what matters to them is the scoop . . . to get something the other fellow can't.

FLASH . . . Chris gets scoop . . . plane swooping on terrified Chinese child . . . blotted out by falling wreckage . . . all a fake . . . plane just a three-foot model . . . look of terror paid for in dollar bills . . . wreckage dropped from tray above camera . . . but New York falls for it . . . loves it . . . demands more.

4. *Alma (Myrna Loy) accuses Chris of deliberately crashing her 'plane to get a shot.*

5. *Chris and Alma over the burning ammunition ship—a sequence reconstructed from actual newsreel shots of the burning Morro Castle.*

6. *Chris climbs out on to wing to get his picture.*

FLASH . . . rival Dennis tries to get even . . . stages fake "mercy flight" by girl friend Alma Harding . . . flying in at night with imaginary serum for imaginary cholera outbreak . . . Chris locked out of airport . . . sneaks in at the last moment . . . rides out on field to get close-up of plane landing . . . rides too close . . . crashes plane . . . it blazes . . . leaves camera turning while he saves girl . . . dawn of love.

FLASH . . . Alma suspects Chris staged crash to get picture . . . Chris double-crosses Alma . . . pretends to destroy film of crash . . . but destroys blank instead.

FLASH . . . Bill double-crosses Chris . . . steals crash film . . . sends it to rival newsreel as own shots . . . arranges to sign up Alma to rival reel too.

FLASH . . . Chris double-crosses Bill . . . gets Alma back to New York on faked "they've fired me" story . . . signs her up for own company.

FLASH . . . Chris and Alma fly out to get shots of burning ammunition ship . . . when ship blows up they're just a few hundred feet above it . . . but they get the pictures . . . scoop all rivals.

FLASH . . . Bill blackmails Chris on past fakes . . . unless Chris gets Bill a copy of the burning ship pictures . . . Chris double-crosses his boss to get a copy for Bill.

FLASH . . . rival newsreel bosses get together . . . check-up on Chris and Bill's double-crossings . . . Chris, Bill and Alma fired.

FLASH . . . Chris and Bill get together . . . make amends to Alma by raising cash to send her to South America jungle to find long lost brother . . . Chris double-crosses Bill . . . follows her . . . Bill double-crosses Chris's boss . . . finds out where Chris has gone . . . gets there first by faster plane.

FLASH . . . Chris double-crosses Bill . . . finds long lost brother first . . . saves him from horrible Voo-Doo death by screening newsreel to terrified blacks . . . gets exclusive pictures of rescue . . . rushes them back to New York.

FLASH . . . Alma decides she owes all to Chris . . . finds him filming gangster hunt . . . crowds screaming . . . bullets zinging . . . she dashes to his side . . . tells him love has flowered . . . he smears blood on her face . . . gets faked shot of wounded lady . . . happy ending . . . fade out.

It's all so simple. Brave knights doing battle for fair lady—but she's the only thing that is fair. But what does it matter. Writers Hammond and Stallings have planted tongues firmly in cheeks, from the first flash of Chris looking for the war in a Chinese night-club, to his final wink as he shoots Alma's blood-stained face. Out of a crazy business, they've made the craziest story. When Alma joins up with Chris's company, she asks: "What kind of a business is this?" And the boss's secretary put all in one line: "Oh, it's swell! You don't know you're in the violent ward till you're strapped down to the bed!" But it's a ripping, roaring, crackling story. The fans will love it; the box-office will roll in it. Only the real newsreelmen will hate it, tear it to pieces. Why wait till they do. Here's what they're going to say:

When Chris goes up in the plane with Alma to shoot the burning ship, all he takes is a tiny hand camera. No sign of microphone, amplifiers, or sound recording gear. Yet when he gets his picture back to headquarters, there's all the sound of the fire, the plane, the sirens, and the explosion. That isn't newsreel, that's magic.

When the ammunition ship goes up in one raging crash, Chris and Alma are close enough to have their plane blown to pulp under them. Yet they get away with a gentle shake up.

To save Alma's brother, get on the right side of the natives, Chris gives a talkie show in the jungle. But to get to that spot he had to paddle four days up the Amazon River in a small size canoe. How did he carry the talkie gear, giant screen, loudspeakers, projectors, and so on? Maybe it was Voo-Doo.

Too Hot to Handle has plenty more like that; for the real newsreelmen to yowl about. But what does it matter. Their yowls will only prove that they're tough, but not tough enough to take it: that they have a nose for news, but not nose enough to spot the year's grandest slam. And maybe they won't notice too, that *Too Hot to Handle* has something else. Right in the middle, its rollicking rhythm stops dead, for the neatest sum-up of the whole philosophy of newsreel. Alma is seeing on the screen for the first time the pictures she helped Chris shoot over the burning ship . . . men jumping for their lives . . . a tiny coastguard cutter risking destruction . . . picking up survivors from alongside the blazing ammunition . . . Alma can't bear it . . . she breaks down:

ALMA: Why do people want to look at such things?

CHRIS: Well, I don't know. I never thought about it. But it's news, and they do want to.

ALMA: They shouldn't be allowed to.

CHRIS: Well, maybe it goes deeper than that. It's news, but it's the kind that's good for people. We're living in a crazy, mixed-up world, aren't we? Everybody grumbling and growling, and at each other's throats. But here, millions of people are suddenly going to be reminded, right between the eyes what true human idealism really is. Four men and a guy waving his hat in a tiny boat—doing their job—giving their lives for people they don't even know. Because it's their job. Savvy?

THE OTHER WOMAN

Maybe she's just a deal of trouble to the home, but MARY ELWYN thinks there's a lot to be said for the "other woman" who, in any case, is indispensable to movie makers.

Marlene Dietrich in "Song of Songs"

IN film, song and story the most maligned figure is always known as "The Other Woman". Perhaps she's just a bit of peroxided trouble round your home, but you film makers couldn't get along without her, so isn't it about time somebody went in for a bit of fair play and showed the other side of her soul, which we are all supposed to possess?

Give her false whiskers, change her into a bit of the firmament or a pet mouse, but if you want to make a film you've got to have her in one form or the other. That's how Myrna Loy found herself up against a strange version of the Other Woman theme in *Test Pilot* —and it sort of took a new technique to cope with things when your husband's gal was the sky.

Usually The Other Woman is used to give the public its quota of what it likes best, the high cost of loving as typified by alluring ladies edited by Adrian.

Or you can have a cute picture featuring an effective serum like the *Three Smart Girls* against fatherly O.W. trouble.

Or seven former wives to upset the apple-cart of Bluebeard's eighth.

Of course sometimes the primitive threat of an Other Woman is upset by the niceties of civilised behaviour. This was the case in *Un Carnet de Bal* when the calm attitude of various episodic wives towards their husband's still handsome past was a treat to behold. In *Algiers*, née *Pépé le Moko*, the velvet and perfume of the new love got somehow tangled up with Pépé's nostalgia for Paris, his desire for escape from the silken, sweaty tatters and the narrow white walls of the Casbah.

But for a really seasoned, time-honoured and respectable bit of Other Womaning done in the imperial manner, nothing could be nicer than *A Royal Divorce*.

They *do* say that Josephine was not all that she might have been, that playing Empress in the most devastating wardrobe in Paris had a greater appeal for her than being the wife of Le Petit Caporal—be that as it may, she was still the injured wife if only for reasons of state, and has done a fine job with the sentiments of succeeding generations.

And so this one-sided business goes on. Of course, there should be a Federation of Other Women just to see that "everythink is fair and above board", as Mrs. Miffin, the voluptuous char and a notorious O.W., would have it.

CONSIDER *The Great Ziegfeld* wherein Luise Rainer got the Motion Picture Academy award for presenting a life-like study of the wronged wife. As a cold observer it appears that such a mess of psychological vomit was excuse enough for husband trouble at its worst, and enough to turn the stomach of an honest-to-god Other Woman.

Come, come, let us be fair. Think of all the wives you know who are uninventive cooks and unimaginative mistresses and won't have toys about the house—what man can stand for that indefinitely?

Often a man has to put up with plenty of nagging into the bargain, and the *malade imaginaire* is more often a wife than not. Now we know that in films these couples will find redress for their troubles without necessarily having recourse to the wiles of another woman. They will have a fine old drunken orgy together, skin their knuckles in a free-for-all and end up the best of friends during the resulting hang-over.

That's fine, but actually what happens in this sad world is that the man who is what is known as a decent fellow usually tries to make the best of it. Probably avoids marital trouble by staying out with the boys most evenings and on Saturday nights takes the missus and the kids to the cinema when he'd much rather be playing poker at the club.

Then he meets a woman who finds him so much cleverer than herself, and is pretty unexacting into the bargain. His wife's nagging ceases to be so important to him, and the thought that by the world's code he is wronging her makes him unusually patient and thoughtful. He gets from the other woman just that something his wife cannot give, and their home is a happier place because of her.

But do we ever see that phase of real life on the cinema? Of course we don't.

We get plenty of embryo and actual Other Women on the screen, but their mission is never to bring happiness. The screen gives you Bette Davis in *Jezebel*, all tumbling curls and saucy posturings, but finishing on a note of doubtful authenticity.

In *Black Limelight* the O.W. didn't do much harm until she went and got herself murdered, and her unkindest cut was always the fact that she was from what is known as a "lower class" than the wife and mother.

Now a really promising O.W. was the scheming puss played by Vivien Leigh in *A Yank at Oxford*; quite possibly she might settle down and turn into a little ray of sunshine for somebody.

Sometimes directors confuse the issue by changing the O.W. into a bit of sky, maybe a horse, or a profession for a hero who has a passion for that sort of thing. Ah, but in the old days things were simpler. It was only for the virgin of his dreams that the hero of melodrama would consider rupturing himself to rescue her from the burning tenth floor—if he were to save his wife or an even faintly-heliotrope lady-love, what a hiss would go up from the audience!

At other times, thinking to sneak by and eliminate one corner from the old triangle, directors go in for marrying people off well before the story opens. Then its shoulder to shoulder, with the old marriage lines safe in the piano stool, and the darkest hour comes not from some sly puss with home-breaking tendencies, but against the call of the something-or-other, spaces, careers, super-gangs, goodness knows what-not, which calls them both as the rapids call to the spawning salmon.

Top right: Miss Lilian Tashman.
Above: Myrna Loy.

When the wife, still a legal encumbrance, becomes technically the Other Woman, things come to a pretty pass. According to Cal York of "Photoplay", just that has become the role of Mrs. Rhea Gable, who is sticking to her legal rights while the sympathy is going out to a couple of nice people, husband Clark and Carole Lombard, for whom wife-trouble is the barrier between them and a fifty-acre ranch in the San Fernando Valley.

Of course there are some people that make it a duty for *all* women to try and be the Other Woman as far as they are concerned. What possible excuse could be found for *any* woman not trying all her box of tricks on W. C. Fields, Charlie McCarthy, Slicker the Seal (I do hope it's not 'Miss' Slicker) and Gary Cooper?

Of course every woman in an audience is unfaithful most of her film life—so what does she suppose her husband is doing? After all there are enough celluloid Loys, Crawfords, Dietrichs, Lamours and Russells if placed end to end to reach a couple of times round the world. You can't grumble about a strip of celluloid however it's decorated—it's when it stands upright, weighs around 120 and can say "gimmee" that it gets a nuisance to have around the house—but take heart, even then its disguise may be a better-tempered husband and a happier home. Not many wives in these days have to lurch into the snow as the bailiffs break up the furniture—while the husband sits in a homey bar saying "how now, my proud beauty" to a bosomy Diamond Lil.

GIBBONS: All right, boys, what can I do for you?

REPORTER: Well, Floyd, my paper wants some dope on your new thrill pictures.

GIBBONS: Fine! Take a seat. Shoot—go ahead shoot, Jack . . . no posing though. The idea is brand new, Joe, never before done in movies. I'm making real motion pictures of true adventures in the lives of everyday people, in the office, in the home, factory, farm, city or small town, and I'm paying good money for them.

REPORTER: Say, I've got an adventure for you, Floyd - I——

GIBBONS: You bet you have. Every man, woman and child has had some adventure sometime or other in their lives. I want that adventure. I want them to write to me and tell me all about it. See that mail over there? Those are real life adventures sent to me from everyday people. I pick my scenarios from them and—not from Hollywood. Now here's one . . . it comes from a little fellow by the name of Edward W. Capps, of Detroit, Michigan. By the way Miss Alter, have you heard from Mister Capps? Is he in the——

SECRETARY: He'll be right in, Mr. Gibbons.

GIBBONS: Fine—here's one that'll blow your hat off. This happened back in the horse and buggy days down in the most beautiful spot in America—the Cumberland mountains in South Eastern Kentucky. Our hero Eddie Capps is just twenty-two years old. A hustling young salesman for the Keystone Tobacco Company. In those days salesmen often travelled through the rugged mountain country on horseback.

Johnson: Here you are, Eddie. The weather looks kind of threatening.

Eddie: Oh, I'll get through all right, Mr. Johnson. United Tobacco Co. won't get the jump on me this trip.

Johnson: Well, I'm all for you, Eddie, but Gus Lobe's been selling for United up in that hill country for a long time.

Eddie: Say! I hear Gus left yesterday. Oh, well, I'll hustle along. I'll catch up with him.

Johnson: That's the spirit, Eddie. I'll see you when you get back.

Eddie: Right! So long.

Johnson: So long.

(*Eddie Capps is leaving on horseback: his boss sees him off.*)

GIBBONS: Well, sir, somebody told him about a short cut through the mountains. It was just a backwoods trail, but it cut off twelve miles—so Eddie took it—night found him in the heart of those lonely mountains—a storm came up—it rained cats and dogs. After prodding along in the storm for hours, believe me, the lights in the ramshackled cabin in the woods looked mighty good to Eddie. The boy is wet, tired and hungry. His horse is ready to drop. Gus Lobe or no Gus Lobe, Eddie and his horse just can't go any further.

(*Eddie knocks at the door of the cabin. The door opens and an elderly man and woman peer out at him.*)

Maw: Who's out there, Clayt?

Clayt: A stranger in these parts.

Maw: What's he adoin' out a night like this?

Eddie: I'm a salesman and I got caught in the storm, ma'am. I'm not sure of the road. That bacon you're cooking sure smells good, ma'am. Say, I wonder if I could come in here until the storm's over and maybe get a bite to eat. I'll be glad to pay you well for it.

Maw: How about it, Clayt?

Clayt: I reckon it'll be all right. Maw, put on another rasher of bacon.

Maw: I'm satisfied.

Eddie: Oh, gosh, thanks.

Clayt: You can tie your horse in the shed back yonder—yer snack will be ready in a little bit.

Eddie: All right, thank you.

GIBBONS: Well, sir, Eddie felt a little better with his horse in the stable and some corn pone and bacon under his belt but outside the storm redoubled in fury and young Mr. Capps began wishing he hadn't been so anxious to catch up with Gus Lobe.

Eddie: Gosh, looks like it's never going to let up.

Clayt: No, it don't.

Eddie: Say, why don't you use some of my tobacco instead of that brand your smoking. It's a whole lot better. Gee, I was just thinking, it's getting kinda late. Say, do you think you could put me up for the night so I could get an early start in the morning. I'll pay you well for your shelter.

Clayt: I reckon we can put you up.

Maw: Whar?

Clayt: Up above.

Eddie: Oh, that'll be all right.

Clayt: Can't put you no other place.

Eddie: It's a whole lot better than going out in the rain.

Clayt: Well, young feller, I reckon, you're right tired—wanna turn in?

Eddie: Yey, guess I'd better.

Clayt: You ain't aiming to leave afore we get up?

Eddie: Why no, Oh, I guess I better pay you now, huh?

Clayt: No, no, that's all right.

GIBBONS: Eddie Capps is a pretty tired boy. All he wants now is a place to rest his weary body. He feels secure, sheltered from the storm. But, boy, oh boy, he doesn't know what's coming to him in that lonely mountain cabin.

(*The old man takes Eddie upstairs to the attic.*)

Clayt: That'll be yourn over yonder.

Eddie: What's that? Who is that over there?

The ATTIC of TERROR

A Warner Bros. new True Life Adventure Short, commentated by Floyd Gibbons.

"A Dead Man!"

Clayt: Daid man.
Eddie: Dead man? Oh, what's he doing up here?
Clayt: Just went to sleep and didn't wake up. Been dead a day . . . been waitin' for it to stop raining so's we could take him out.
Eddie: Well, I don't think I'd like to stay up here.
Clayt: Wal, there's nobody makin' you stay, stranger. I reckon you might find it mighty damp outside.
Eddie: Don't know what to do.
Clayt: (*laughs*) He won't harm you none, it's the live ones you gotta be feared on.
Eddie: I guess you're right.
Clayt: Good night.
Eddie: Oh, could I have the lamp?
Clayt: I reckon you kin have it.
Eddie: Thanks.
Clayt: Good-night.
Eddie: Good-night.

GIBBONS: Now sleep seemed to be out of the question for Eddie after what he had just learned . . . but he was dog-tired. He had to get some rest so he took off his coat and shoes and lay down on the hard bed. The drumming on the roof of the rain lulled him. Soon he was sound asleep. The thunder did not waken him but something else did. In a sleepy daze he hears the sound of voices. Is he dreaming? Is it morning? No he's not dreaming and it's not morning. It's still night. By golly, what a night for poor Eddie. What's that light coming through the crack of the floor?

(*Through the crack Eddie sees the old man and woman searching his saddle bags.*)

Maw: Did you find it?

GIBBONS: Yes, those are real voices all right. What's going on down there. Who is that big man with the others. What are they doing? And how did his saddle bags get down there?

Clayt: Th'ain't no money ther.
Maw: He must hev it on him.
Giant: What are you going to do now?
Clayt: Wal, do yuh want the money?
Giant: Sure.
Maw: Better watch out. He might wake up this time.
Giant: We'll take care o' that.

GIBBONS: Eddie is wide awake now and plenty frightened. These people are thieves, perhaps worse, They might even be murderers. His mind flashes to the man in the other bed . . . the dead man. Perhaps he too had come here seeking shelter, only to find death. They are murderers. Eddie's heart goes into his mouth. The crushed skull of the dead tells him all he wants to know, and that's not all. He recognizes the poor battered features of his friend and rival—Gus Lobe. Gus Lobe, clubbed to death, murdered in this very room. Gosh, I wouldn't want to be in Eddie Capps' shoes for a million dollars. It is his zero hour. Fate is closing in on him. He wants to get out of this house of death before they come for him. But how? No window up here. One way out—through that trap door. And yet, going down that trap door will put him in the hands of the killers. But you better do something. There's no time to waste, Eddie. Sheer terror gives him an idea. Why not change places with the dead man. That's it, put Gus in his bed and take Gus's place. Eddie works fast. The noise of the storm muffles his movements. He lifts the dead body of Gus Lobe and carries it to his own bed. Carefully he places the dead man to appear as though he were sleeping. And Eddie climbs into the blood-soaked bed just in the nick of time, and pulls that awful blanket over his head. The seconds drag like years as Eddie lies waiting in the bed of the dead man.

(*The Giant batters at the body in Eddie's bed with a club.*)

Clayt: Shh! Let's see where he put his money.

(*As the Giant and the old man go to search the corpse, a knock is heard at the door. Two men enter.*)

Men: Hi, thar!
Maw: Clayt!
Mountaineers: Hawdy, Belle! Where's Clayt?
Maw: Him and Ike's aputtin' some things up above. Clayt!

(*The two descend from the attic.*)

GIBBONS: An hour drags by. Eddie was still alive, but his position was more dangerous than ever. Those murderers could not let him escape now—he might talk, but his nerves would not let him stay in that room of death another minute. He had to get out someway. Beneath that trap door, four men are seated around the table, but Eddie realises that it's time for a desperate move. It's now or never.

(*Eddie runs for it, amid cries of "Don't let him get away!"*)

Eddie dashed straight for the stable, threw himself on his horse and galloped off into the night. He reached Barberville safely and by morning was riding back with the Sheriff and a posse. They caught the murderers and Court House records show that the old man and his wife were sent to prison for life—the actual killer was hanged—and Joe, that ends the true adventure of Eddie Capps.

CAPPS: Here's Eddie Capps in person, Floyd.
GIBBONS: Well, I'm glad to see you, Mr. Capps, and you don't look a day older either.
REPORTERS: Congratulations, Mr. Capps. Well, Floyd, we've got to be getting along. So long!

"The crushed skull tells him all . . ."

"Robbers!"

GIBBONS: And now, Mr. Capps, I have the honour to present you my personal check for $250.00 for that wonderful story and don't forget you still have a chance to win that $1,000.00 prize.
CAPPS: Thank you, Floyd. I'll be seeing you.
GIBBONS: Just a minute, Mr. Capps, if you please. May I ask just what you are going to do with all that money.
CAPPS: I'm going to buy hot tomales with it.
GIBBONS: Hot tomales?
CAPPS: No kidding, Floyd. I run a hot tomale manufactory in Detroit.
GIBBONS: Oh, excuse me. I didn't know that. That story of yours was certainly a hot tomale.

AND now boys and girls, young and old, remember that you and you and you all have an adventure that I can use. It doesn't have to be as blood-curdling as the one about Eddie Capps to win the two hundred and fifty dollar prize or to be eligible for that $1,000.00 grand prize paid for the best story of the entire series. You just write to me about it—write me the facts. They must be true—never mind how you write them, I'll take care of that. Address your letter to me, care of Warner Brothers Studio, New York City.

The POLITICS of SIXTY GLORIOUS YEARS

Without endorsing every dot and comma of this challenging statement, SEE welcomes it as bringing into the open a matter of immense interest to the British public to-day.

THE film trade papers have, as the result of one or two newsreels of political items, been arguing in the cause of "No Politics on the Screen." They argue that it is bad for a cinema manager to offend any of his patrons in this way, as they must necessarily be of mixed political views. Yet this talk is becoming dangerous, for it is easy to argue in the abstract for no politics on the screen, but when it comes to a definition of what can be shown and what must be forbidden all writers on the subject have found themselves in a quandary. One writer, approving the deletion of certain liberal sentiments from a newsreel, said in the same paragraph that that newsreel was distinguished for its favourable handling of the Premier's "successful Munich agreement." If that last statement is not politics on the screen, then Mr. Chamberlain is not a politician. What would be the attitude of the writer had Mr. Attlee been the Prime Minister? Would he have agreed that a favourable presentation of his doings was above politics?

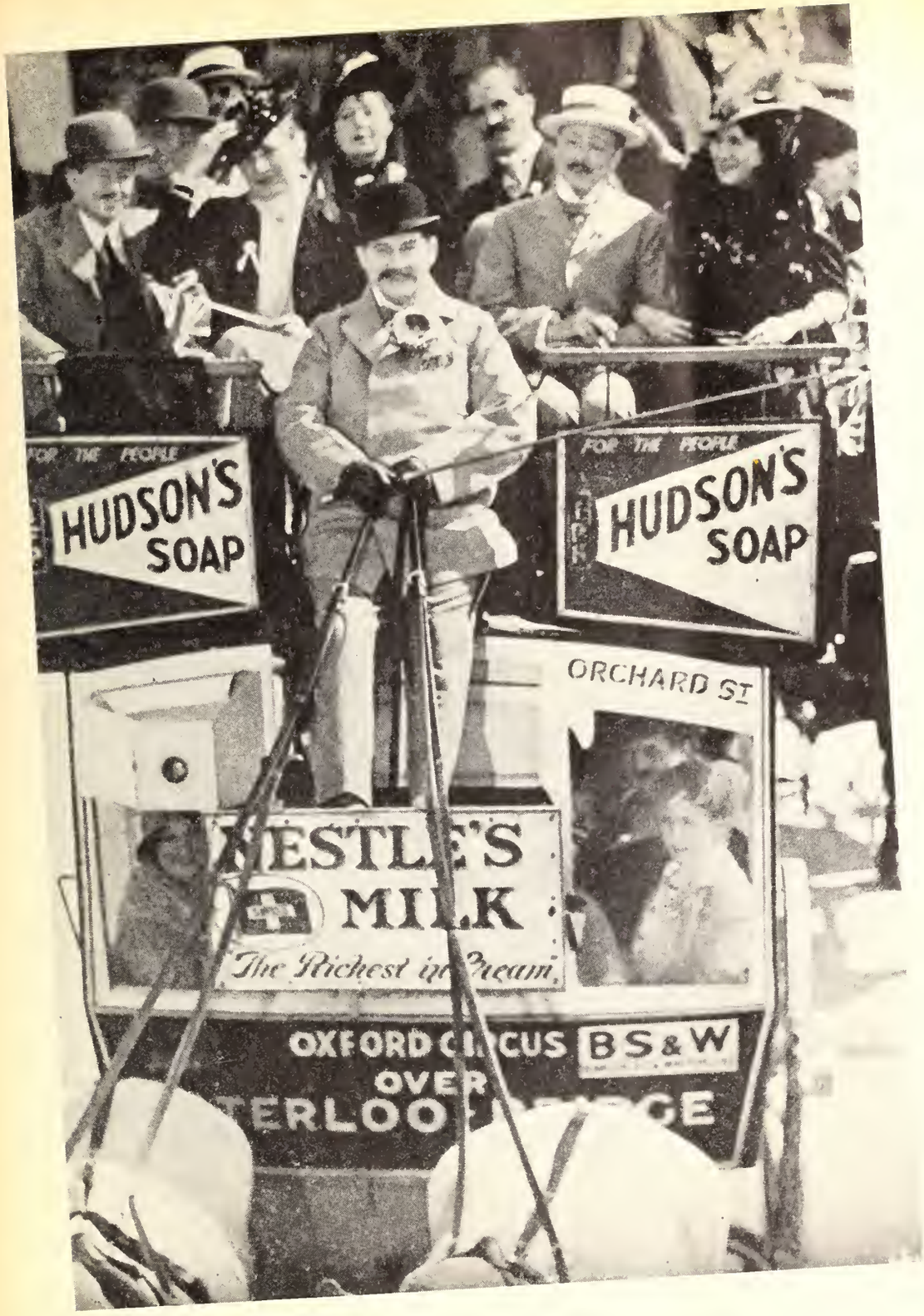
The issue of No Politics on the Screen, except when favourable to conservative politicians, shows where the interests of the film industry lie. Yet it is counter to the very object they have in mind. That is, not to offend their patrons. There are millions of people to whom the face of Mr. Chamberlain and his doings are as objectionable as the face and doings of Mr. Attlee are to many millions of others. It is significantly akin to fascism this policy, for, to develop the argument to its logical conclusion, Mr. Chamberlain, the leader, is above politics, and his voice can be heard all over the land to the exclusion of all others. If the cinema industry truly believed in No Politics on the Screen, then there should be no Mr. Chamberlain, unless Mr. Attlee, Sir Archibald Sinclair and Mr. Harry Pollit had a similar amount of screen time. For that is true democracy—a free voice to all the people. The Semitic origin of the majority of the cinema industry should make them consider the value of maintaining a free voice.

This leads to a consideration of *Sixty Glorious Years*. Most of the controversy in the film trade concerns newsreels. They have tended to ignore the politics of feature films. Yet *Sixty Glorious Years* is a propaganda film. It has the unanimous support of all our newspapers; even the left-wing papers, who ignore the political effect of films, endorse it.

It is, in many ways, a curious film. It is called "An Intimate Diary"—perhaps to reassure the exhibitor that he is getting a personal story with star value. This intimate diary gives the producers an excuse to ignore the great happenings of the Victorian era; the establishment of an Empire, the building of industry, the great engineering works, the discoveries in medicine. They excuse the ignoring of these things by calling the film an intimate diary. However, the intimate diary does not prevent the producers launching into the Crimean War and the Siege of Khartoum.

In many ways all films are propaganda. *Sixty Glorious Years* was undoubtedly initiated as a film production for commercial ends, but it is disturbing to note the connection of Sir Robert Vansittart as adviser. Sir Robert was translated in the Foreign Office to be Chief of British Propaganda. It is not possible that he entered the job without thinking of the propaganda value to the Government of such a film as *Sixty Glorious Years*. The film's producers obviously had good intentions; they wanted royalty at the premiere and they wanted permission to shoot at the Royal Palaces. It was good business to have Sir Robert. He cannot have been hired for his knowledge of the period, for there are many better experts. The producers wanted prestige and they obtained it through Sir Robert. What else they obtained is reflected in the film.

ON the whole, the film reflects a political ideal of a benevolent leader hampered by inefficient advisers. More than once the democratic method is criticised. Victoria or her contemporary prime minister so much want direct action that they rail against the delays attendant upon democratic procedure. To those who view the present Government's tendencies with dismay, the association of Sir Robert Vansittart with a film that so openly questions democracy, will be given more to think about.



The film can very easily bluff one into a loose acceptance of a sentimental life of an obviously remarkable woman, but one fears, on maturer consideration, that the episodes have been selected and the facts distorted to achieve certain unspecified and certainly suspect ends.

The object of the film is to stress the bourgeois aspect of the British Royal Family; to create the feeling that the Royal Family is very much one of ourselves, weeping for the same causes, with the same social problems, so that the middle classes can feel a close identification of interests with royalty.

Victoria and Albert apparently live their life much as most middle class families would desire to do. They are patronising to the poor, patient with their rulers, the politicians, alternately affectionate and domineering to their children and definitely masters in their own house, owing allegiance to nothing but their own superiority.

Consider these attitudes closely and see how closely akin they are to a fascist policy. The fascists say, in a patronising way: "something must be done for the poor; their politicians must be liquidated; their life must be governed."

Any exhibitor who believes in No Politics on the Screen should examine carefully *Sixty Glorious Years*. For, while our London newspapers are clucking and the snob premieres of London audiences clap, there are many millions whose sentiments may be offended by the film and there may be raspberries in Wigan and Glasgow.

As a film, it is competently made. It is photographed in Glorious Technicolor and runs the whole gamut from red to pink. It smacks of big production budgets with location shooting at Balmoral, Osborne and Buckingham Palace.

The dialogue is distinguished above the majority of British films, though, on the whole, it is delivered as dialogue and not in conversational terms.

The political personages in the film are really only lay figures, though Palmerston, in the hands of Felix Aylmer, breathes life during his speech in the House of Commons. C. Aubrey Smith, as Wellington, plays the benevolent grand-daddy typed by Lionel Barrymore in American films, and libels a hard-living, hard-drinking, tough old English soldier, who was never the fatherly old sissy of the film.

Gladstone never comes alive, and he is quite erroneously saddled with the responsibility for the death of Gordon, through a desire to show Victoria in a favourable light. Joe Chamberlain, played by Henry Hallatt, brings a note of dignity to the end of the film. He has a difficult part to play, for, sitting at a table in the House of Commons while the old Queen dies, he has to make a speech which excuses the film's ignoring the writers, the industrialists, the scientists and the doctors who built up England during the Sixty Glorious Years.

It is still difficult to reconcile Queen Victoria with the mincing Miss Neagle—who nevertheless tries desperately hard—particularly when one has in one's mind the performance of Pamela Stanley in *Victoria Regina*.

Anton Walbrook plays a very competent Albert, and makes the part credible. He reproduces with much success the woodenness of Prince Albert.

Sixty Glorious Years is a film that must be seen—for indications of our political future—for a grand production effort on the part of Wilcox and Miss Neagle, and, although there is "o'er much a-dying," it raises an air of considerable excitement in many places.

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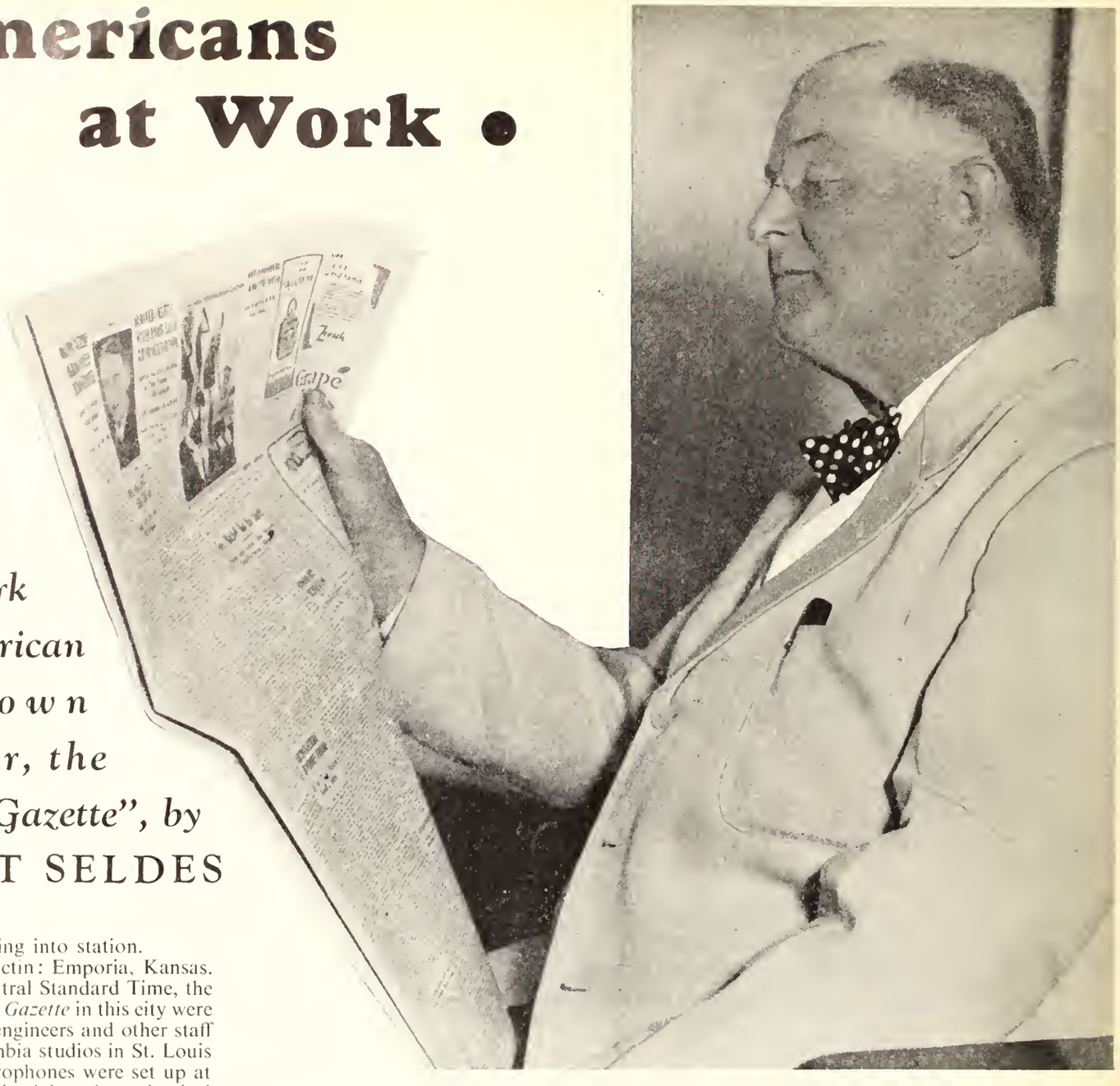
• Americans at Work •



William Allen White

A radio picture of men at work on an American small-town newspaper, the "Emporia Gazette", by GILBERT SELDES

SOUND: Train pulling into station.

VOICE: Special bulletin: Emporia, Kansas. At 8.30 to-night, Central Standard Time, the offices of the *Emporia Gazette* in this city were taken over by radio engineers and other staff members from Columbia studios in St. Louis and New York. Microphones were set up at various points in editorial and mechanical departments. The one we are now using is in the city room, with its typewriters, telephones, goose-necked lights, teletype instruments, most of them mounted on battered desks, which are typical of all newspaper offices. The purpose of coming to Emporia and invading the *Gazette* office is explained by Gilbert Seldes of Columbia's New York office.

SELDES: We had a great many good reasons for coming to Emporia, but we didn't know what we were in for. The truth is that both Harry Flannery of St. Louis, who just broadcast the bulletin, and myself have discovered that Emporia is an ideal place to visit during the hot spell. The temperature may be high in figures but it isn't hot in fact, and it's really wonderful to be in a town where the natives don't begin to complain of the heat until the thermometer hits about 105. Professionally, we came to Emporia because we want to give a picture of Americans at work getting out a small town newspaper—the men and women who make several thousand small town papers all over the country. We chose Emporia because it is a typical small town of the Midwest. Its newspaper, the *Emporia Gazette*, is without any doubt the best-known small town newspaper in the country and the reason is its editor, William Allen White, who made himself a national figure as spending forty years on Main Street. If Mr. White were not sitting right here with a dangerous glint in his eye we might tell you why he is a great editor and a great American. But he wants us to get down to the business of the broadcast, which is about his paper, and we will.

Mr. White, you once told a friend of mine that when you bought the *Gazette* you could, and did, handle all the jobs on the paper. Can you say as much now?

W. A. WHITE: I walked into this office forty-three years ago able to do any job, mechanical, reportorial or business in the *Gazette* office. To-day I'm a stranger in my own back room. Little or nothing of the printer's trade that I learned fifty years ago survives. I bought this shop for three thousand dollars. To-day a competitor could not buy the machinery, if necessary, from the *Gazette* for less than fifty thousand dollars. That the machine age has done to young men entering in life.

But on the other hand, I could hire a printer for a dollar and a half a day forty years ago, and to-day linotype operators' wages range from five to seven dollars a day in this little town. That also is the result of civilisation in a machine age. It has lessened the opportunities of the unusual man, but it certainly has raised the living standards of the average man.

SELDES: In general, on these programmes, Mr. White, we skip the boss and get down to the men on the job, but you are a working newspaper man and there is one thing you can tell us that no one else can. That is, why do you publish the *Gazette*? Here you are in

a town of about 15,000 population, surrounded by larger cities and newspapers get here promptly enough. What is the underlying purpose of publishing the paper at all?

WHITE: The small town newspaper is distinctly an American institution. I mean the paper in the town from five hundred to fifty thousand. It's almost unknown in Europe, they tell me. They're trying in Russia to encourage it, but Russia will have trouble. So the American country town paper rests entirely upon the theory of the dignity of the human spirit. It is democracy embodied. It emphasises the individual. For instance, here is an item:

John Jones is in town to-day with the first load of hay from the third cutting of alfalfa.

That item is the alpha and omega of small town journalism. It dignifies John Jones. It dignifies labour. It dignifies small business. And now, Mrs. Jones has the first forsythia out in her Emporia garden—that's a news item. We're glorifying Mrs. Jones. We're glorifying the human spirit, making the Joneses proud to be Joneses, to cut themselves hay, to have a beautiful individual garden. Upon that glorification rests the American country newspaper and, incidentally, the American democracy.

But the only way to get at the heart of a small town newspaper is to see how it's made. Now talk to Frank Glum. He gets the news in. Frank, Mr. Seldes knows about the news of a Metropolitan paper but not much about the way we handle it. Go ahead and tell him.

GLUM: Well—that is a combination country town and city newspaper (*sounds of workers in office answering telephones and typing*). Aside from the Associated Press which covers the outside world for all of us, there is one. . . .

VOICE: Pardon me, Mr. Seldes . . . there is a fellow on the phone who says he is a reader of the paper and insists that you've got to change something.

SELDES: Now, look, you tell him if he has anything to say of general interest he's still got time to get here and join a broadcast and say it here.

VOICE: Okay, Mr. Seldes.

SELDES: Look, I'm sorry, Mr. Glum, you were just trying to explain the workings of the news department. Go ahead, will you?

GLUM: All right. Many of our local society items are telephoned to the office where the person is actually involved. Then we have scattered about town many good friends to phone in items about their neighbours and friends. Frequently, they give us tips on good news stories which reporters might not find on their regular rounds. You see, we use little syndicated stuff except comic strips.

VOICE: Excuse me, Frank, what do we want on this school bond stuff?

GLUM: What's it about?

VOICE: Well, it's a statement from Fred Heath, the President of the School Board, and he says it will probably be a long time before we have another bond election. . . .

GLUM: Well, make it short, put it in quotes, we'll put it on the first page.

VOICE: Okay.

GLUM: Now, that, Mr. Seldes, is an example of my job as Managing Editor and News Editor. I'm responsible for the news that goes into the paper. I must see that the reporters cover all the places where news stories usually break, and I try to keep an eye on the happenings of the whole town.

Mr. Trippe, who is now on vacation, really is a combination City and District Editor. He edits copies of many of the local stories and handles the news coming in from the correspondents. I also have to decide how large a headline a story is to have and whether or not it is on the first page.

SELDES: Now, look, what is your biggest headline to-day?

GLUM: Well, the most important story in to-night's paper is the result of the school bond election. The town voted down two new school buildings. That's more important to us than any story happening in Washington or any place else. Not only our adult readers, but all the children are interested in those two schools. But we still print all the state and national and telegraph news. Mr. Cander can tell about that. Mr. Cander, can you tell Mr. Seldes what you think is the most important headline in to-morrow's paper?

CANDER: Something new, not connected with any story in the headlines recently always is the hope of the telegraph editor, and his news break would be preferred to developments on a current story . . . that goes for a paper of any size. Now, you take to-night's *Kansas City Star*. Their lead stories are about the Hines trial in New York, the Japanese War story.

SELDES: How does that compare with yours?

CANDER: Those are the same stories that we ran at the top of the columns in our paper to-night.

SELDES: That's very interesting . . . now, tell me, how does the telegraph editor, in general fit in on a paper that has such a profound local interest?

CANDER: The teletype and the Associated Press news, already typewritten like a telegraph—they don't need the Morse Code telegraph operators to receive and type the material. These teletypes, Mr. Seldes, bring in about 30,000 words a day; about twenty-six columns set up in type. I can use from twelve to twenty columns out of that, depending on the number of pages in the day's paper. Now, the hardest job I have is deciding what to throw away. I give preference to items of national interest, then news of special interest to Kansas. Of course a big news break abroad will sometimes overshadow local and state and national, as it does in the Metropolitan papers.

SELDES: Well, I can see that. But do you really think it's important for you to cover international news entirely?

CANDER: That's right, Mr. Seldes. The *Gazette* has accustomed its readers to this national world news. When Mr. White first bought this paper more than forty years ago, he was more interested in world affairs than the average country editor was, so he printed. The *Gazette* just naturally educated the people that way, but don't forget, we still think this local news is of more importance.

SELDES: Now, there's something. You know, the personals are considered pretty much of a joke in our Metropolitan papers.

CANDER: Yes, the Metropolitan papers are the ones who publish the gossip columns. They are nothing more than unverified personals with most of the facts left out. How would you like to look at a few of our personals?

SELDES: Let's have a look.

CANDER: Miss Taylor, will you read that Stryker's family item for Mr. Seldes?

TAYLOR: Certainly. *Mr. and Mrs. O. R. Stryker and children, James, Russell, John and Doris, have gone to Denver to see Mr. Stryker's step-father who is sick. Mr and Mrs. Stryker were invited, but not the children to go on a fishing trip to Michigan, but they declined the invitation so they could see Mr. Stryker's step-father and his brother, Lee Stryker, and also so the Strykers' children could have a trip.*

CANDER: Tell him why we think that's a good item.

TAYLOR: Oh, that's news here because the Stryker family is well known. He is a former county attorney and the children have many friends. It's of general interest too that Mr. and Mrs. Stryker would rather go where they can take the children than to go fishing alone.

CANDER: Tell him where you got that story.

TAYLOR: Mr. Stryker turned in an item about their Colorado vacation and a neighbour gave us the other angle.

VOICE: I beg pardon, here's that school bond story, Frank.

GLUM: Okay—pardon me, please, while I read copy on McDaniels' story on the school bond.

SELDES: Exactly what are you looking for when you read copy?

GLUM: Well, it consists of reading the story or facts, or eliminations, the writing of the headlines. Of course we always have to watch anything that might be libel or slander.

SEEDES: Do you think there's any libel in that story you wrote, Mr. McDaniel?

MCDANIEL: Well, I've been in newspaper work for 13 years and they haven't got me on a libel suit yet.

SELDES: Where did you start—in the city room?

MCDANIEL: I really began as a printer's devil, but when I came on the *Gazette*, I went on the proof desk looking for mistakes and not for libel; then I went on the telegraph desk, that's Chandler's job now, and next to straight reporting and sports.

SELDES: Both at the same time?

MCDANIEL: Yes, I cover the City Hall beat, that's politics, and cover all kinds of sports.

SELDES: It's an active life. Do you enjoy it?

MCDANIEL: Yes, especially the sports angle. Of course this isn't the kind of newspaper reporting you get in the movies . . . old drunkards that make front-page scoops every day. But as a matter of fact, that isn't true of big town newspaper men either. They're on a job the same as we are.

SELDES: Now, if you had the choice, will you tell me, of becoming either a first-rate reporter in a big city, or the owner-editor of a small town paper, which would you take?

MCDANIEL: If I could be a baseball writer in a city with a big league team, that would be my first choice. But otherwise I'd rather be a small town publisher.

(*Continued on next page*)

SELDES: What do you think the chances are?

MCDANIEL: Not so good. A reporter nowadays can hardly save enough out of his salary to put up the capital for a newspaper, even in a very small town. But just as Mr. White said, forty years ago he bought the *Gazette* for $3,000. To-day the plant couldn't be duplicated for $50,000. Where are you going to get it?

SELDES: I don't know. I think that's another side of newspaper work, Bill. We've been watching the news come in and now we suddenly discover that it costs money to run a paper. Shall we ask Mr. White—do you think it's possible for a young man to start a paper now as you did 40 years ago?

WHITE: As I said a moment ago, the matter of investment marks the chief difference between yesterday and to-day. Investment and profits. My wildest dreams when I came here were to make twenty-five hundred dollars a year, forty years ago. One year not long ago, but certainly before the depression, ten or fifteen or years ago, we paid income tax here on $30,000 in a year. It wasn't all *Gazette*, the *Gazette* makes no more money, but most of it was *Gazette*—the *Gazette* makes no more money than ten or twenty other little papers in Kansas. But we're capitalists now and the old easy-going relation, half beggars and half blackmailers which was ours in the 1880's, has disappeared. We have acquired the capitalist's fishy eye. But I should say—we must be fair—and probably two-thirds of the small town press now is liberal or progressive and in Kansas I should say ninety per cent of it.

SELDES: I should say that the small town publisher has the fishy eye of the capitalist. Now, does he ever have to submit to pressure from the other capitalist? I mean, the advertisers, for instance?

WHITE: Well, now, I'm not going to answer that. Let Eugene Lauder, Manager of our Advertising Department, handle that. Eugene, come on, come over here and tell 'em about it . . . the roof's the limit, don't be afraid . . . tell the truth.

LAUDER: Well, there aren't many attempts made to put pressure on a small town paper if they advertise or know in advance it can't be done. Sometimes, though, an advertiser can't see why an item can't be kept out of the paper. For instance, some time ago some food dealers were arrested for displaying meat which fell below the requirements. Some of the dealers thought we might have left that item out. It was my job to tell them that the only reason their ads were read was because the people trusted the *Gazette*. If they lost confidence in the *Gazette*, advertising wouldn't be worth the paper it was printed on. I'll tell you what I tell 'em, Mr. Seldes. I tell them that the bell on the cash register in the advertising office is not heard back in the news and editorial rooms. We sell advertising to the local merchants. More than ninety per cent of our advertising is local and the basis on which it is sold is simply our circulation. The merchant can tell absolutely where our paper circulates by the people who come in to buy what he advertises. Have you talked to Wayne Davidson yet?

SELDES: No, I haven't. Let's ask him over. Wayne, will you tell Mr. Seldes about our circulation?

DAVIDSON: We've got, roughly, 7,500 subscribers, Mr. Seldes. Here at Emporia itself, we have more subscribers than there are water meters. People in big cities wouldn't know what that means, but we know. It means that there is a subscriber for nearly every family. To be on the safe side, we say we go into ninety-four per cent of the homes in Emporia. But we actually go to the porches. In towns like ours, newspapers never have much say over newsboys. Ours isn't more than a couple hundred a day. We have 24 boys on bicycles and they deliver the *Gazette*, not on the sidewalks, not on the front lawn but on the porch. That's where Emporia gets its news before 6 every evening.

SELDES: How about outside in the country?

DAVIDSON: Well, about half our circulation is in the surrounding territory, the towns in the rural routes and the thirty-thousand mile radius. Out there they get the paper for the same reasons as in Emporia. It is often their only paper and they want to read the ads for

bargains. But the feature is the local correspondence. About sixty of them send in local news. Were you ever a country correspondent, Mr. Seldes?

SELDES: No, that's one that I missed on my way.

DAVIDSON: Well, they tell me it's a great job, but we'd better ask Frank Glum about them.

SELDES: Yes, I was going to. Now, we've been going through the newspaper business. We heard Mr. White tell us first why such a paper as the *Gazette* is published. Then at city desk and reporters who told us how the news gets here. Mr. White again and his business managers have told us about costs and how they're met through advertising and circulation. Circulation we now see leads us right straight back to the readers and to what we want to read, the out of town correspondents. How many have you got (I think you said sixty)—are they important, Mr. Glum?

GLUM: Correspondents are very important, Mr. Seldes. We have 27 in all the towns in our territory, and we have about thirty in the rural districts. The biggest story the *Gazette* ever handled probably was the airplane crash in which Knute Rockne, the Notre Dame coach, was killed.

That happened about thirty miles from here in the hills a few years ago. Our Cottonwood Falls correspondent who is an insurance man telephoned us as soon as the plane fell. He didn't know who was on it but he had the number of the plane. I told the Associated Press in Kansas City. Right away they got the number of the ship, went out and checked the airport lists. They found Knute Rockne was on it. A few minutes later the news of Rockne's death was flashed all over the world. I think that shows how important a good rural correspondent is.

SELDES: It certainly does. But there's another type of correspondent I might ask your opinion of. I mean Constant Reader, all those who write letters to the editor.

GLUM: Well, letters to the editor—Mac, have you got any good letters lately?

MAC: I think we can find some pretty good ones. You know, Mr. Seldes, we print all the letters people write to us if they are printable. They write about everything from Czechoslovakia to mixed bathing. . . .

SELDES: There's a piece going to the composing room. I wish you'd follow that, Mr. Flannery. You see, we're getting to the final stages of newspaper work. You've heard what the function of the paper is—how its news and business departments operate, what part is played by personal relations with the reader, and one thing we haven't got is the physical newspaper itself. You see some copy which Mr. McDaniels wrote and Mr. Glum edited is now on its way to becoming type, and Mr. Flannery is following it into the composing room.

ANNOUNCER: Like every other composing room in the world, the *Emporia Gazette's* mechanical department is distinguished by three things—one you see, one you hear and one you smell. The smell is the never-mistaken odour of printer's ink, sharp and pungent and intoxicating to newspapermen as catnip is to cats. I wish we could transmit a whiff of it to you. Now, what you hear is the clatter of the linotype machines and these machines are the most conspicuous objects in the place. There are six of these superhuman monsters in the room. And they had to put a concrete floor reinforced with steel under them. The machines are a combination of typewriter and foundry. After the typewriter portion is set for type, a lead casting is made and then a great arm reaches down, grabs the type, sends the individual letters back ready to be used again while at the other end out comes one line of type after another to make a column and then the page. Half a dozen operations more or less run at the same time in a composing room, every one of them requiring an exceptional degree of skill, but in every composing room one man has to know how everything is done. He is the mechanical superin-

"*This man is News*" (*Paramount*)

tendent of the plant. The *Gazette* superintendent is John Jocknor. We are going to ask him to speak for the old composing room. Now first of all, Mr. Jocknor, how long have you been with the *Gazette?*

JOHN: About thirty-eight years. I started when I was about 15 as a printer's devil, you might say I never worked anywhere else. I was on the linotype for about 15 years and then on my present work. I call it foreman, but Mr. White likes to call it superintendent. Most of the other boys are just about the same, Tom Jones, for instance, who has been with us for 39 years, is now the head make-up man. Paul Chandler, who was the linotype operator, is now a telegraph editor. Gene Lowther started as a carrier boy and is now advertising manager.

ANNOUNCER: Now, I want to ask you a few questions about them. Are they all Emporia boys?

JOHN: Practically all of them. They worked up, I believe, with the *Gazette*. Yes, we train our own printers here. Start them as printer's devils, carriers, etc., and then they move on up when someone leaves, is promoted or something. This way every man who gets to be a boss knows the job of the one under him by experience.

ANNOUNCER: That makes the *Gazette* even more an Emporia newspaper. Now about the linotype. That's the most interesting machine in the composing room. How many columns of type does an average operator set on it in a day?

JOHN: Well, on an average an operator would set no more than a column of type in an hour, or 8 or 10 columns in an 8-hour day. With the linotype, we turn out about six lines of type a minute or about two columns an hour or fifteen columns a day. That's more than two solid pages. However, very few operators can do that.

ANNOUNCER: Are the linotype operators paid by the amount of type they set or according to the time they put in?

JOHN: No, they're paid by the week. They average about $35.00 a week depending upon the length of time they've been with us.

ANNOUNCER: Tell me, where's the story now that came in with us?

JOHN: Well, this copy has now been set and the proof from the galley is in the hands of the proof reader. He makes the necessary corrections and then the proof goes back to the linotype operator and then on to the make-up man.

ANNOUNCER: Let's stop at that point and ask you a little bit about that to make it a little more clear, not only for me but to those who are listening. Now, the make-up man gets this type after it's been corrected, then he puts it in print form. He not only puts that in there, but he also puts the advertisements in there. Isn't that right?

JOHN: He arranges the advertising and the reading matter—the whole thing.

ANNOUNCER: And then after that?

JOHN: Then, when the page is completed and presses are made out of the forms on soft cardboard, they are then put on the press.

ANNOUNCER: Now, again I want to ask you —that soft cardboard is called the masters— and then this masters is pressed over the type so that it has impressions in it, and then you put the type into that making stereotype, as you call it, and the mat makes the circular page. What's the idea of making the circular page?

JOHN: Our press is set for that so they fit right on there and the type doesn't go on the press at all, just the impression of the type.

ANNOUNCER: Does that give it more speed?

JOHN: Yes, it runs just as fast as you wish.

ANNOUNCER: How fast are your presses— as fast say as most of the presses in the big cities?

JOHN: Not quite, but it will run about 20 to 25 thousand an hour.

ANNOUNCER: And in other words, you can get your run down in less than an hour. I see. Then, the paper is ready to be printed and then it's ready to be run off and then they go out to the carrier boys, I suppose. Do they come here to get your papers?

JOHN: Yes, sir.

ANNOUNCER: And then take them out and deliver it out. What time does the *Gazette* get out to them in Emporia?

JOHN: We reach most of the people in town just about 5.30. So that they can have their paper before supper.

ANNOUNCER: You have two editions, I believe.

JOHN: One at 2.30 and one at 4.0.

ANNOUNCER: And what's the 2.30 edition for?

JOHN: That's for mail.

ANNOUNCER: Now, is the press about ready?

JOHN: In fact it's ready to start now.

ANNOUNCER: Now, the press is almost ready to go.

SELDES: If they're ready to roll, that means that our time on the air is practically over. There are a couple of things we ought to tell you. First, we ought to tell you that Mr. William Allen White is probably the only business man who has a rocking chair in his office and never sits in it. It's for angry citizens who come in to protest. They sit in the rocking chair and after a few seconds, they relax and their anger is gone and Mr. White has his way. Second, we ought to say that the whole programme has been coming from the city room of the *Emporia Gazette*, Emporia, Kansas, and we are profoundly grateful to the publisher, Mr. White, and his entire staff because they've done all the work and let us sit by and listen to them. This programme is one of the Americans at Work series which is presented by Columbia's Adult Education Board, a series showing Americans at work in different occupations each week at this time.

"Americans at Work" was broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System of America, to whom we are indebted for permission to publish this extract. . . .

SIWA...

Ancient Desert Fastness filmed for the first time. An account of the film unit's adventures, by RONALD STRODE.

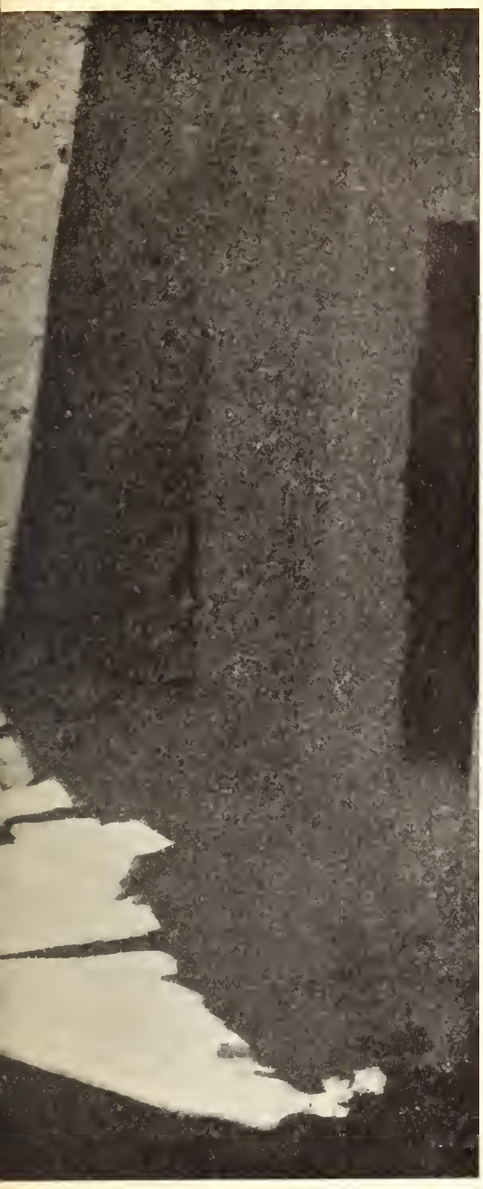
Stills from "Siwa—the Fastness of the Desert."

ALTHOUGH it seemed that the newsreels, travelogue producers, documentary film makers, *and* Mr. James Fitzpatrick had been over the Atlas with a microscope, there is at least one spot they have overlooked—Siwa, the ancient Oasis of Jupiter Ammon, mentioned in the writings of Herodotus.

It was left to the initiative of Mr. James Hamilton Black and Victor Stoloff, the well-known Russian director, to provide a record of this isolated outpost set in the heart of the Western Desert of Egypt.

Siwa was first connected with Egypt about the sixteenth century B.C., and in the twelfth century it was colonised by Rameses III. The original deity of the Oasis is said to have been a Sun God, probably in the form of a bull; it was supported by a powerful and barbarous cult. So great was its reputation that it was visited by Kings, Princes and wise men of the ancient world, including Croesus and Alexander the Great, who was invested with Divine honours and proclaimed to be the Son of Jupiter.

During the Persian invasion of Egypt in 525 B.C., Cambyses, King of Persia, sent an



army of 50,000 men from Luxor across the desert to sack Siwa and wreck the shrine of Jupiter Ammon. They never arrived there and were never seen or heard of again. They are supposed to have been engulfed in a raging sandstorm and the whole army to have perished of thirst: no trace of them has ever been discovered.

The present population of Siwa consists of about 4,000 persons of Berber origin, and their manners, language and customs, which are entirely different from those of the Egyptians and the Arabs, remain practically unaltered from the time the town was first founded, owing to its remoteness and its lack of communication with the outer world.

When Hamilton Black and Victor Stoloff first conceived the idea of making a documentary feature of Siwa they had to obtain special permission from the Egyptian Government.

Before writing the script Mr. Stoloff spent six weeks in Siwa studying the lives and customs of the natives, out of which he built up a connected story, and after his return to Cairo the unit, headed by Victor Stoloff (director), James Hamilton Black (producer), set out on the arduous journey of over 350 miles across the desert.

Heavy rain added to the difficulty of the trip which took more than double the time expected, and as bad weather persisted during the whole time the unit was in Siwa, "shooting" took seven weeks instead of the three weeks scheduled. This was a serious matter as they had to take their own food supplies, which ran out half way through the stay, necessitating a native diet.

A number of difficulties arose, apart from the weather, such as the impossibility of getting girls to act in the film owing to the strict Moslem codes which are still observed, and the prevalence of snakes, scorpions and white ants which destroy anything not encased in metal.

THE film *Siwa . . . the Fastness of the Desert*, which will shortly be shown in London, is a three reeler, and its story tells of a feud between two owners of date groves over the ownership of a palm tree that has grown in the middle of a path between their groves.

Many of the customs and superstitions of the Siwans are introduced into the film. On nearly every house a skull of a donkey is hung as the natives have an inherent fear of evil spirits and the skulls are believed to ward off the 'evil eye'. All the donkeys carry round their necks a little bag containing charms for the same purpose.

When a Siwan dies, his widow or 'ghoula' goes into mourning for four months and ten days. During this period she keeps to her house, only going out at night, as anyone who meets or sees her or is seen by her is believed to incur a terrible curse. When a 'ghoula' walks abroad, the whole town is filled with warning cries: "Beware of the ghoula". All bolt inside their houses and other places where they are safe from meeting her.

The difficulty that the unit had in showing a 'ghoula' can be imagined. Eventually after a long search a woman was found who was willing to act the role, but it was impossible to persuade others to appear as her escort, so that difficulty was overcome by using men dressed as women. Great care had to be taken to keep this a secret, otherwise the men would have been the object of scorn and derision.

Mr. Hamilton Black was surprised at the acting abilities of the natives and although most of them had never seen a film in their lives they proved apt pupils, the star performer being a young Siwan, Ismail, who bears a striking resemblance to Sabu, of *Elephant Boy* fame.

The undeveloped negative was sent from Siwa by road, rail and air to Paris for processing and editing. The Siwan songs, dances and dialogue were sound-recorded in Cairo, and the orchestral music has been written by Paul Dessan in Paris, and recorded there on Western Electric. Because the negative was processed in Paris it was not possible for the unit to see the rushes, but in spite of this perfect continuity has been obtained as the result of a good script and able directing.

The film was presented in Paris at the Musée de l'Homme, Trocadero, in October, with the Egyptian Minister presiding, and a pre-view will shortly be taking place in London.

London Scientific Film Society

The L.S.F.S. has been founded to bring to a wider audience films which interpret the modern world. The programmes will include leading scientific, sociological and documentary films from Great Britain and abroad.

The first performance of the Society is on Sunday, November 13th, at the Academy Cinema, 165 Oxford Street, London, at 2.30 p.m.

Normandie
Sea Urchin
Oil from the Earth
How the Motor Works
$\ddot{X} + X = 0$
Seed Dispersal by Wind
We Live in Two Worlds

Membership costs 10/- or 15/- a season and secures admission to at least four Sunday performances. Application for membership and guest tickets should be made to The Secretary, London Scientific Film Society, 28 Hogarth Road, London S.W.5. Flaxman 3258.

Only members and their guests can be admitted. No tickets will be issued at the door.

"Come Out Fighting"

these men nothing will be left bu

Cinema Screen, writes STAN PATC

CLIFFORD ODETS experienced the same trouble with his *Golden Boy* as does L. A. G. Strong in his new book *Shake Hands and Come Out Fighting* (Chapman & Hall, 10s. 6d.). His fighters are a trifle too secondhand to be real. But Mr. Strong, like Mr. Odets, is at his best when writing about ordinary people—his own people. He breathes life into his pugilistic puppets when telling of the struggles and ambitions of preliminary boys.

In his introduction he states a fact we already know too well, that with few exceptions novelists' descriptions of fights and fighters are unsatisfactory. For the exceptions he points to Jack London's already famous story, *A Piece of Steak* and the writings of Robert Westerby, James Curtis and Michael Fessier. I would like to add Ernest Hemingway's *Fifty Grand*, easily the greatest fight story ever written.

Hollywood fight films are often difficult to believe, but now and again somebody digs down under the camera angles and produces a little masterpiece like Jimmy Cagney's *Winner Take All* and Max Baer's swaggering *Prizefighter and The Lady*.

Speaking of the great upset when the 35-year-old Fitzimmons flattened the world's champion, James J. Corbett, the referee's summary was perfect:

"Corbett," he said, "easily outboxed Fitzimmons. Fitzimmons indisputably outfought Corbett."

The Tommy Burns—Jack Johnson fight gets a chapter to itself. I know Hugh D. McIntosh, the man who promoted and refereed it, very well. I was present at the fight, aged three, perched on my father's shoulder, while my mother worried her heart out at home thinking that the blood and brutality might have its effect on me in future years. My father, along with thousands of others who were present at the fight, was there to see the Black Menace knocked off his cocky throne. I'm told I lisped "Beat 'im Tommy!" at the top of my shrill voice.

But Tommy Burns, who was a squat little fellow looking more like a welter than a heavyweight, couldn't have beaten Johnson with a horseshoe in his glove—he just wasn't big enough (or good enough) for the job. In a way, it was like Peter Kane fighting Max Baer.

Johnson humbled the great Jim Jefferies next.

There's a story about Jim Jefferies, not told in the book, that gives a revealing slant on the early film business. The Jefferies—Sharkey fight, at the Coney Island Athletic Club on the night of November 1, 1899, was one of the first full-length fight pictures ever taken by a movie camera.

The fight, which was no better than a barroom brawl, went 25 rounds to a decision with Jefferies a disputed winner on points.

Powerful arc-lights were placed over the ring and Jefferies, who was noted for his terrible tempers, swore up hill and down dale that the lights had very nearly cost him the fight.

"I was almost roasted to death," roared the champion at his manager.

Tom Sharkey, who had taken a terrible beating about the body, was carried from the ring and taken straight home from the arena and was actually forced to stay in bed for two months.

Meanwhile, the company who had bought the exclusive film rights of the fight had failed to register it at the U.S. Patent Office and were absolutely stumped when a rival company came out with a bootleg version of the same thing.

After several conferences it was decided that the smart thing to do would be to stage the last round of the fight all over again—change the action of it slightly so that it differed from the bootleg version—then they would be able to get a copyright.

Sharkey, still black and blue from his beating, was hauled out of bed and hustled to the arena. Jefferies was already there, stripped to the buff and roaring for the celluloid fray, but there were no spectators and the night of the real fight had seen the arena packed to the rafters. Scouts were sent out to drag people in from the highways and by-ways, and with Bill Brady, Jim Jefferies' manager, impersonating the referee, the strange scene was filmed.

Jess Willard is given the credit he deserves for his 25-round-knockout over Jack Johnson. The often published picture of the finish, with Jack Johnson lying on his back shielding his eyes from the sun, merely proves that the negro had had enough and was taking the

. . . " When the last gong goes for heir shadows, flickering across the ETT, reviewing new book on boxing

(*Associated British Press*)

easy way out. Big Jess was punching hard that broiling day in Havana.

ENTER Jack Dempsey, the greatest fighter who ever pulled on a glove. Willard crumples like the Hindenburg line under the withering fire of his attack.

The boxing scene moves to Europe where Georges Carpentier is humbling the best that England has to offer. Beckett, Bombardier Billy Wells and George Cook go down before the flashing rapier attack of the Orchid Man.

The stage is all set for the first of the million-dollar fight gates—Dempsey *v.* Carpentier for the Heavyweight Championship of the World, war veteran *versus* the champion who had been branded "slacker" by U.S. ex-servicemen, all the ingredients of a showmanship "natural."

It took Dempsey exactly three-and-a-half rounds to prick the Carpentier bubble. The soldier of France put everything he had into a right-hand punch that landed inches too high, then collapsed under a machine gun burst of leather that cut him down like wheat before a cutter.

Gene Tunney came next. Dempsey, his legs gone and his dazzling speed impaired, was beaten by a boxing robot who had planned every punch months before the articles for the fight were signed.

Smarting under the bitter gall of defeat, Dempsey snarled for a return and the fight took place at Soldier's Field, Chicago, on the night of September 22, 1927.

I was there. I gave up my job in Los Angeles, bought a round-trip ticket to Chicago and bet what was left on Dempsey to win. I knew Jack slightly through hanging around the down-town gymnasium where he trained, and this soft-spoken giant who never forgot a face and never refused help to a hungry man had given me a bad case of hero-worship.

Nothing would convince me that Jack wasn't robbed that night, but I've changed my opinion since. Any one of the four punches that dropped Tunney for the famous long count would have knocked a man out in the past, but the fire had gone from Dempsey. Years, and the thousand-and-one worries that go with being champion had aged him almost overnight and he went down to defeat like the man he was, patiently plodding forward against a boxing machine that beat him to the punch every time.

Everyone knows of the scene after the fight when the half-blinded Dempsey whispered to his ever-faithful trainer, Jerry the Greek: "Take me over to the champ, Jerry; I want to congratulate him!"

THIS scene has a parallel in the story of the time the great Black Panther, Harry Wills, in his prime, was matched in New Orleans with another great negro fighter, Sam Langford, then well in his forties.

The fight went the distance and Wills won handily on points. Afterwards it was revealed by Langford's second that old Sam had said to him when the bell rang for the first round: "Point me at him, son, point me at him." Langford was practically stone blind and had taken on Wills—the man whom Dempsey had refused to fight—to get money for an operation to his eyes. Like the great-hearted Stanley Ketchel he feared no man living.

The arena lights dim and brighten again. Tunney retires and sailor Jack Sharkey is the new champion. Max Schmeling, the Black Uhlan, wins the title for Germany, on a foul in 4 rounds, only to lose it back to Sharkey two years later.

Pituitary Primo Carnera, the glandular gladiator, sinks Sharkey under a sea of punches. Max Baer, the Livermore Larruper, comes out of the West to batter Primo with a series of roundhouse rights that can be felt in far-off Italy.

Then Cinderella man, James J. Braddock, who had been fighting since 1926, defeats Max Baer in 15 rounds and the new champion defends his title against young black Joe Louis, who had already kayoed the swaggering Baer, in what had been aptly described by Ernest Hemingway as a "Million Dollar Fright," and so we come to the present day with Glass-Jawed Louis still champion after shattering Schmeling in one terrible round and Max Baer and Tommy Farr waiting on the sidelines for just one more chance.

When the last gong goes for these men nothing will be left but their shadows flickering across the cinema screen, for one generation to say to the next—"These were *men*—their dust is made of thunderbolts."

CENSORSHIP

and the

DOCUMENTARY

by John Grierson

THE position of the documentary film is more intriguing to-day than I have known it. With its insistenee on authenticity and the drama that resides in the living fact, the documentary film has always been in the wars. To-day, as the forees of propaganda close round it, the battle for authenticity becomes more arduous than ever.

Not so long ago, the materials of steel and smoke were not considered "romantic" enough for pictures, and the documentary film was supposed to be engaged on a sleeveless errand. To-day, people find industry and the skills that reside within it, magical and exciting. But it was relatively easy to find the beauty in the lives of fishermen and steel workers. Their dramatic atmosphere was ready-made. Doeumentary moved on to more difficult work when it proceeded to dramatise the daily activities of great organisations (*B.B.C.*, *The Voice of Britain*, 6.30 *Collection*, *Weather Forecast*, *A Job in a Million*, *Night Mail*, ete.). It was a unique achievement when, in *Big Money*, it made a fine, exeiting story of the Accountant General's Department of the Post Offiee—surely, on the faee of it, one of the dullest subjects on earth.

Behind the three or four hundred doeumentaries that have now been made in Britain, there has been this eonstant drive to attaek new materials and bring them into visual foeus on the sereen. Clerks and other suburban figures were more diffieult to present than fishermen and steel workers, till the documentary men got the hang of the work they did and begin to understand how to attach the importance of the great public organisations they operated to the seeming dullness of their daily darg. All this meant time, researeh, and getting accustomed to human materials whieh had never been ereatively treated before.

Yet, I think the greatest advanee of all came with two little films whieh, except among the far-seeing, went almost unnotieed. One was

called *Housing Problems* and the other *Workers and Jobs*. I think I am right in saying that the credit of the first goes to John Taylor whose first film it was. The second was Arthur Elton's. They took the documentary film into the field of social problems, and keyed it to the task of describing not only industrial and commercial spectacle but social truth as well.

These simple films went deeper than earlier films like *Drifters* and later films like *Night Mail* and *North Sea*. They showed the common man, not in the romance of his calling, but in the more complex and intimate drama of his citizenship. See *Industrial Britain*, *Night Mail*, *Shipyard* and *North Sea* alongside *Housing Problems*. There is a precious difference. More poignant and, indeed, more classical, is *Housing Problems*. It is not so well made nor so brilliant in technical excitements, but something speaks within it that touches the conscience. These other films "uplift." *Housing Problems* "transforms" and will not let you forget.

I have watched the various documentary men come to that point of distinction. They know that a thousand easy excitements lie right to their hand. They could engage themselves in brilliant exercises in technique, and a dozen I could name could out-Bolshevik the Bolsheviks and out-Nazi the Nazis in high fallutin parades against the sky line. But they do not do it. *Housing Problems* was a marker of where they wanted to go and, shunning the meretricious attractions of the easy excitements, they have kept to their line.

The powerful sequence of films which have appeared during the past three years about nutrition and housing and health and education are the measure of their achievement. Significantly enough, the big films this year hardly deviate into the "epic" of industry at all. They are *The Londoners*, a film describing London's fifty years of local government; the G.P.O. film on national health; *New Worlds for Old*, Rotha's discussion of the public utility of the fuel resources; and the films of economic reconstruction, education and agriculture, made in Scotland.

These films of social reconstruction and the growing points thereof have become a powerful force for the public good. They have found their place in the cinemas; they have a vast audience outside the cinemas; they are attracting more and more attention and prestige abroad. Other countries make documentaries, but no documentary movement anywhere is so deliberately constructive in public affairs, or has so many powerful national allies as ours. Above all, its continuous and unremitting description of Britain's democratic ideals and work within those ideals, has a special pertinence at the present time.

THIS policy is not popular in all quarters. Though the Minister of Health expressed publicly the other day his gratitude for the Nutrition film, it is wise to remember that when that film was first made, it was branded by political busy-bodies as "subversive." Silly enough it sounds, but obstacle after obstacle has been put in the way of the documentary film whenever it set itself to the adult task of performing a public service. Sometimes it came in the cry of the Censor that the screen was to be kept free of what was called "controversy." More often, it has been in the whispered obstruction emanating from party politicians.

For the documentary men, whose vision has sought to go beyond party politics to a deeper sort of national story altogether, the path has not been comfortable. It has taken a good deal of persistence to maintain that a full and true story of British life is more likely to describe our virtues as a democracy, and the richest picture to present in this and other countries.

Whatever flamboyant pictures come from other countries, we can present films that are of the bone and substance of British life to-day.

In many of the documentary films, the country is shown tearing down slums and building anew, or facing up to unemployment and reorganising economically: in general, passing from the negative to the positive. The key to the strength of the films is that they are continuously bent on breaking down and building up, and passing from the negative to the positive. It is in this, precisely, that most of us have felt that the strength of this democratic country is made manifest.

Yet I fear one thing. The unofficial censorships have sought to embarrass this honest picture of Britain which we have now partially achieved, and have been anxious to substitute for the heartfelt interpretation of responsible artists the synthetic lie of partisan interests. There is always the similar danger that they will seek, in presenting Britain abroad, to show only the superficial and bombastic elements in the British scene. No country is greater in tradition and ceremonial than Britain, and we may well be proud of it. Fine pictures might be made of it, and there is no documentary man who would not wish to join in making them. One would protest, however, if the ceremonial of Britain were made the be-all and the end-all of our picture abroad. Of itself, it would be an unsubstantial and even silly meal for intelligent foreigners. The growing monotony of Bolshevik propaganda three or four years ago, and the monotony of Nazi and Fascist propaganda to-day are ample evidence of that.

I sum up the matter by saying that if we are to describe the panoply of power and forget the living, working, everyday Britisher in the process of projection, our picture will be both false and, from the point of view of international relations, foolish. People of goodwill, and the wiser heads of the state, will, I am sure, keep that truth before them, and resist distortion. As for the documentary men, they have been fighting synthetic nonsense all their lives. By their very principles, they cannot be a party to false witness.

Top three stills: 'Weather Forecast'. Above: 'The Face of Britain'.

FEAR!

"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (*R.K.O. Radio*)

EVERY investigation into the effect of films on children reveals some element of fright or fear. In dealing with this, it is more than necessary to preserve a balanced judgment. The word "fear" suggests nightmares leading via mental derangement to a lunatic asylum. The topic can easily become a bogey which holds up a few neurotic children as examples of the whole mass of a younger generation. Almost any honest adult between 20 and 25 years of age can recollect an early visit to a cinema where an incident produced a "fright". The memory is clear, but the adult in question is reasonably sane and well-balanced. Therefore in accepting the following opinions, the influence of fear should be regarded almost as an inevitable baptism to regular film-going.

One of the Payne Trust investigators states, "the experience of fright, horror, or agony as a result of witnessing certain kinds of motion pictures seems common from the accounts of children and of high-school and college students. The experience is most conspicuous in the case of children. Its manifestations vary from shielding the eyes at crucial scenes during the showing of the pictures to nightmares and terrifying dreams, including sometimes experience of distinct shock, almost of neurotic proportions."[1]

[1] 1928. U.S.A. "Motion Pictures and Youth." W. W. Charters.

The power of the film to frighten young children is the subject of this authoritative article by RICHARD FORD.

The Managers of 142 Cinemas were asked to detail the film-incidents causing fear to children, and their answers are here summarized.

★ ★ ★

The London teachers who reported to the L.C.C. in 1932 were also insistent on the extent of fright. "In one school 117 out of 213 children confessed to being frightened and 178 out of 213 admitted unpleasant dreams as a result. The younger children are frightened chiefly by ghosts, the older by mystery."[2]

"Do the pictures ever frighten you?" was a question asked to 923 elementary schoolchildren in Birkenhead.[3] The replies: No, 465; Yes, 148. Sometimes, 298.

THE element of fear is officially recognized as undesirable. For this reason the Board of Censors have lately invented a Horrific Category—'H'—to label certain films and to prohibit persons under sixteen from seeing them. Local authorities sometimes supplement this ruling by prohibiting certain films altogether, or by increasing the strength of the category from 'U' to 'A', or from 'A' to 'H'.[4]

The recent release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* provides an illustration. The British Film Censor awarded the film an 'A' certificate, on the grounds (presumably, but not expressed, of course) that certain scenes would be frightening for children. This decision was supported by Dr. Susan Isaacs, the Child Development authority at the Institute of Education, who wrote to *The Times:*

> I have recently had a delightful hour-and-a-half with *Snow White*, and would agree that it is a splendid entertainment for any ordinary child over seven or eight years. But the detailed horrors and gruesome setting of the Queen's transformation into the witch, and her end, are far too realistic for the younger child.
>
> It is quite true that, even at these ages, children love blood and thunder, and are ruthless in their own moralities; but what is actually seen is apt to be far more real and far more compelling to the younger child than what he imagines for himself. Grimm's own words are comparatively bare and conventional, leaving the child free to fill them out with his own images, according to his own psychological bent. In contrast, the dramatic and realistic resources of Disney's technique are so magnificent and so compelling that the child who has only recently learnt to distinguish between what is real and what is imagined may well be shaken to his depths. I would strongly urge that parents should err on the safe side and not take children of less than seven or eight to see *Snow White*.

The opinions of the film critics on this point were interesting:

The Times: "The idea, which some have had, that *Snow White* is in any part unsuitable for children is incomprehensible."

News Chronicle: "I can see the Censor's reasons for ruling originally that children should not see it alone. There are sensitive ages at which they are liable to be frightened by the clutching trees.

"There should be grown-ups to assure them at harrowing moments that happy things are ahead for all the good people."

Daily Express: "When *Snow White* runs through the forest with the brambles plucking at her frock with bony fingers, the results are quite terrifying."

Daily Mail: "I do agree with the British Board of Film Censors in having given this film an Adult Certificate."

Daily Telegraph: After describing various incidents, the critic writes: "It is true that such things have always been part of the Grimms' nursery tale. On the screen, however, they acquire a nightmarish power which explains the Censor's view that *Snow White* is not a film for the unaccompanied child."

Nevertheless, the film was granted a 'U' certificate in the London area, in the surrounding counties, and in a large proportion of towns and districts elsewhere.

It is sometimes not easy to ascertain exactly when children are frightened. It is very rare for a child to leave a cinema during the performance. The verdict of one cinema manager after talking to the Children's Committee of his Mickey Mouse Club is worth quoting:

> A vote was taken as to the most popular type of film, and 1 out of 17, 6 voted for Crime and Detection. I was rather astounded to see such a large proportion in favour of Crime and Detective subjects. When I said to them: "Surely this kind of film is rather frightening", several of the members immediately replied, "Oh, no". Then I said, "What about all the shrieking that I hear sometimes?" The reply was, "That is not because we are frightened but because we are excited and cannot prevent ourselves from doing it."

In the writer's experience, there is usually a tense hush when children are frightened during a film, and they hold their breath, with small restrained squeaks, while they grip the edge or arm of the seat. The noise of healthy screaming during a chase scene is entirely different.

IN a questionnaire sent to 142 cinema Managers who are responsible for special children's matinees in the Odeon and associated Cinema Theatres, two questions concerning child fear were asked. The first concerned Cartoons, the second Serials, both of which are shown regularly at these children's matinees.

Eighty-three per cent of the Managers stated that the children were *never* frightened by incidents in cartoons.

Sixty-one per cent of the Managers stated that the children were *never* frightened by incidents in serials.

Therefore, in perusing the following examples of incidents which have caused fear, the reader must bear in mind that they are provided by a considerable minority of the Managers in charge of children's matinees in the group investigated—the largest group of children's matinees in this country.

The following are verbatim comments supplied by the 17 per cent of Managers who considered that children were occasionally frightened by cartoons:

At times when a monster chases victim or a repulsive close-up is screened.
Very young children do not like big ferocious faces brought up large on the screen.
Close-ups of horrible characters.
Where ugly faces and animals are gradually enlarged until they take up the whole of the screen.
Only by extremely gruesome or grotesque figures.
Spiders, bats, etc.
When an ugly character is brought from normal to close-up.
Ultra grotesque.
Gruesome effects.
Occasionally as in *Pluto's Judgment Day*.
Close-up of cat's open mouth as in *Pluto's Judgment Day*.
Close-ups of grotesque animals with big teeth.
Sadistic and suffering sequences.

(*Continued on page* 309)

[2] School Children and the Cinema. L.C.C. 1932.

[3] "The Cinema and the Child." Birkenhead. 1931.

[4] The Surrey Licensing Authority has given *Her Jungle Love* an 'H' category for instance.

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FEAR!—*continued*

Face close-ups of spiders and gorillas, etc.
Insect cartoons occasionally frighten the very small child.
Ogre close-ups. Fantastic and frightening animals. Thunder and lightning.
Not exactly frightened; but the court scene in *Pluto's Judgment Day* was disliked intensely.
I have known some of the younger ones to be rather scared by some of the more terrifying Disney characters.
Only momentarily on close-ups of the villains' faces.
Never really frightened. The usual gasps are heard when anything grotesque, such as an enormous spider, is shown, but this type of scene is invariably received as part of the picture.
The youngest ones by the portrayal of ogres, spiders, etc.
Only when Robber Cat appears in the cartoons, and little ones afraid of *Pluto's Judgment Day*.
Very occasionally, by close-ups of weird spiders.
Horrific animals.
Several Disney Cartoons—*Donald and Pluto* and *Modern Inventions*, have Machiavellian incidents which to many children are frightening. This fear subsequently gives way to sympathy for the victim, so that Donald Duck is liked on a basis of tragedy rather than comedy.

HERE are some comments by Managers revealing *What type of incident in Serials causes fear among children.*

Scenes where bodily harm or death is threatened. Scenes of violence. On the other hand they revel in fights as depicted in Westerns.
Running from wild animals, or victim being threatened by approaching danger in form of oncoming train, car or savages.
The fiercer type of shooting scenes, and scenes in which heroes or heroines suffer too obviously.
When the hero or heroine is about to suffer in some way.
Not frightened, but apprehensive. Show tremendous concern over delicate and dangerous situations.
When hero or heroine is suffering or in danger of suffering pain or torture.
By the grotesque; anything gruesome such as grisly murders, cruelty by the villain to child stars, or by particularly evil-faced villains.
Incidents with hero or heroine in danger.
When a large animal attacks anyone.
Only in cases of extreme knife incidents.
A gruesome type of villain creeping up on someone.
For instance in *Ace Drummond* when a man was being crushed by contraction of walls.
Villain in cloak, hood, etc. Little girls dislike rough men in dirty clothes and beards.
Leaping animals, not necessarily at each other, but primarily at human beings.
Horrific scenes and weird apparitions. Scenes of cruelty.
The younger type do not like close-ups of faces or animals and trains seemingly rushing out upon them.
The Claymen in *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars.*
Chinese villains.
The Claymen coming out of the wall in *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars.*
The serial *Flash Gordon* provides many such incidents. Fire-spouting dragons, etc.
Only by over-accentuated horror.
I would not venture to say frightened so much as excited. This happens when one person creeps up upon another. I have noticed children scream, bite fingers, etc.
Sometimes girls and younger boys, by shooting or violent incidents.
Anything giving a ghostly effect, such as an apparently disembodied hand appearing from the wall, as in *The Clutching Hand.*
Where suspense is over-emphasised and the hero or heroine is being trapped, especially in the dark.
Sudden explosions.
No matter what film is showing some children sit out in the lounge. Some excuse themselves by saying that they don't feel well; others frankly admit to fear. Incidents that frighten—noise, torture, fighting—the last is confined mostly to girls.
At times three or four younger members come out into the vestibule during shooting or killing scenes.
Careful observation shows no genuine fear, but many instances of "pretend" fear, when hero is to be shot, etc.
The "shots" leading to the end of a part or episode.
Aerial duels.
Hero falling over cliff and such episodes affecting the hero. The smaller children are sometimes frightened by shooting scenes, knife throwing, etc.
Anything ghostly in any film will frighten younger children.
Scenes of torture.
When hero is about to be attacked by someone who can be seen slowly creeping towards him.
Monster animals in *Flash Gordon.* Only two children have left in two years through being frightened.
Chasing with guns.
Ugly Chinese characters. Scenes of torture. Ghostly incidents.
Attack on unsuspecting hero or heroine.
Death of animals. Gruesome incidents, such as branding or whipping.
Soldiers flying with wings.
Particularly villainous make-ups. Close-ups of killings, such as knife stabs, etc.
Gigantic monsters of the type that appear in *King Kong.*
People trapped by fire.
By cannon firing, as in *The Mounties are Coming.* Rifle or revolver fire does not worry them.
Hand-to-hand fighting or any eerie subject, as in *The Clutching Hand.*
Usually the scene leading up to the climax on eposide ending.
The Clutching Hand: screams in the dark.
Younger members are sometimes frightened by the end of a serial.
Very young girls sometimes frightened by rifle or revolver shots.
Prehistoric animals as portrayed in *Flash Gordon*, but nevertheless serial proved very popular.
Beating. Cruelty in any form. Shooting. Horrific animals.
Shooting or fighting scenes, if too vivid.

An Odeon Mickey Mouse Club

Basil Wright Reviews St. MARTIN'S LANE and FLASH-BACKS

St. Martin's Lane is a throwback to the deep glamour of the Golden Days of the German Cinema; the genius of Pommer, the Pommer who pushed Dupont into fame and made even mediocre directors appear very good, here re-creates the old nostalgic atmosphere. And, let's face it, the terrific power of the German films was not that supreme feeling of reality, that marvellously aesthetic interpretation of the genuinely sordid, over which we enthused so indiscriminately. It was something much simpler and far less high-falutin'. It was, for the most part, pure sob-stuff and melodrama presented with a passionate determination to relate it to the intimate details of the ordinary. The Americans, wily birds that they are, realized early on that to make a success of this needed something near genius, and therefore never adopted it as production policy; they merely pinched the geniuses from Germany and squeezed the poor so-and-sos so dry that they either gave it up altogether or took the easier course of turning out made-to-measures. The Germans, on a recipe which depended on more Aristotelian canons, and, incidentally on a diet which regurgitated a Hitler, made great films for a short time, and faded. Of their number only Fritz Lang remains, and you could not find a finer exception to prove a depressing rule.

But now comes Pommer, up to his old tricks again, and disturbing our long-smothered pre-Talkie egos. In Laughton he finds another Jannings. (Like Jannings, Laughton acts a lot with his back, which must be maddening for the rest of the cast.) In Tim Whelan he has found a perfect protegé; in Clemence Dane a writer in the direct *Vaudeville* tradition. The result is that *St. Martin's Lane* is a profoundly disturbing and curiously impressive film. It is disturbing in its horrible story—Jannings–Pagliacci—and impressive in its treatment. The sets, for instance, reveal an attention to detail which never defeats itself by prissiness, and are moreover, infused with a sinister atmosphere which, in the true Germanic style, clashes in a menacing manner with whatever slight gaiety may from time to time be going on. The lighting is the best ever achieved in a British film.

The story tells how Charles Laughton, a busker, or entertainer of theatre queues (ably played by Mr. Charles Laughton), adopts a poor homeless waif (Vivien Leigh) who has a talent for dancing. The girl is a selfish, dishonest, unscrupulous bitch, and as soon as he has fallen in love with her while arranging a new street turn she pops off to a meteoric career of stardom as the mistress of a show bloke (Rex Harrison).

Whereupon our Laughton turns onto us the full battery of his superb acting technique and goes to the dogs; this involves reciting Kipling to a magistrate, and again subsequently at a big rehearsal, where he realizes at last that the best thing is to go back to busking.

Good to the heels the well-worn slipper feels,
When the tired player shuffles off the buskin.
A page of Hood may do a fellow good
After a scolding from Carlyle or Ruskin.

Laughton is an actor of terrific talent. As with Jannings, the majestic landscape of his features can never be disguised; and, also, as with Jannings, he has a persuasion of voice and gesture which creates the necessary illusion. As a screen actor he has only one major fault—he reminds you constantly that he is well aware that you are watching; whereas a great star like Gary Cooper never knows you are there. But for all that his performance in *St. Martin's Lane* is the best he has ever given; there is more open flame, and less smouldering; the Cockney accent is genuine, not assumed; and the pathos is not overdone.

But it is Pommer's film. His trade-mark is everywhere—in the vast empty house where the girl dances across the shadows with her stolen cigarette case; in the neat squalor of the busker's attic; in the finely drawn picture of the lodging house keeper and his family, who have nothing to do with the plot and yet, with a curious dignity give the film a validity it would otherwise lack; and in the controlled exactitude of the street scenes. Maybe the cinema has not travelled so far since 1920, after all.

How far indeed have we travelled. In *Flashbacks* we see a very early drama during which the bereaved mother walks, in full evening dress, into the ocean which has snatched her child. To-day's audience laughs. Yet in *A Star is Born* they wept when Fredric March swam into death towards a poached-egg technicolor sunset for the sake of Janet Gaynor. What difference is there? Essentially none; only a change of conventions and technique—in fact *Flashbacks* is a very interesting reminder. Mutt and Jeff are there, doing all the Disney antics; Meliès displays all the trickeries of a Ned Mann; and Mary Pickford is a hundred times as good as Deanna Durbin. The real complaint about *Flashbacks* is that it is rather inadequate in what it sets out to do. It is good on cinema's infancy, hopeless on its middle period and it ignores the coming of sound. Its chief attraction is in the actualities—the old yet curiously up-to-date newsreels of the old Queen at her diamond jubilee, of Edward VII inspecting slaughtered game at Sandringham, of the Kaiser on the S.S. *Imperator*, and of the fire-engines dashing through George V's Coronation crowd. They and Charlie Chaplin have a perennial freshness.

THE LADY VANISHES

Marion Fraser reviews the new Hitchcock thriller, compares the French and the English versions of 'Prison Without Bars', and has a note on the new Marx Brothers film

HITCHCOCK'S film, *The Lady Vanishes*, comes at a time when such diverse products as *Sixty Glorious Years* and *Pygmalion* see the screen. With the drums beating over these major events in British filmland, it is well to remember that Hitchcock, since the earliest days of British movie, has been responsible for a considerable output of first class merchandise. As an isolated film *The Lady Vanishes* is not a terrific event in the industry, but it does serve as additional proof that Britain has something good to offer in the international sphere of entertainment.

Hitchcock retains his reputation as the most consistently entertaining of the British directors perhaps because he sticks to a type of film with which he has become thoroughly familiar. In his hands the technique of the spy drama has reached a high standard not so much because he is a master of melodrama but because he has a genius for combining horror, suspense and comedy.

Hitchcock is not only an expert director, but a stickler for detail. It is the small things in his films that count. His observation of human weaknesses and his capacity for exacting sympathy for each and everyone of his characters including the villain, are the qualities that recommend him to most of his admirers whether or not they appreciate his brand of humour.

THE spy in *The Lady Vanishes* is an inoffensive old lady who carries her packet of tea about in her handbag so that she will be sure of having a really good cup even in the most trying circumstances. Hero and heroine are present but not in stellar rôles, though as a concession to tradition, they do save the old lady's life and go off with each other in the end. The remaining members of the cast are passengers on a train where the major part of the action takes place, and they are an odd and interesting medley of types. Prominent are two cricket fans, played by Naunton Wayne and Basil Radford. One might have seen them of a summer afternoon at Lord's nonchalantly discussing the play. Here on a continental train their obsession is the cricket score and they remain blissfully impervious to the startling events that occur, happy in the knowledge that they are British subjects and that nothing can happen to them. Something does happen, however. One of them stops a bullet. A look of pained surprise comes over his face and he reluctantly reaches the conclusion that the time has come to fight. The two put on a display of careless but first-rate marksmanship.

In the shooting episode, of course, none but the villain is killed and one feels sure that the inoffensive old lady will escape unscathed in her tweeds and stout brogues, to deliver her important secret in Whitehall. With this fore-knowledge it is possible to enjoy the comedy to the full. There remains an element of doubt to allow one to savour the suspense and excitement.

Hitchcock is to be congratulated on the masterly casting of the lesser characters. This, always a pleasant feature of the Hitchcock films, tends to detract from the importance of the principals, a fact that may prove interesting at the box-office where names are supposed to be the first consideration. With *The Lady Vanishes* I hope Hitchcock will have the best of luck.

A STORY about a reformatory for girls has the distinction of being shown in two versions in the West End. It is *Prison Without Bars* directed by Brian Hurst at Denham, and a French version directed by Arnold Pressburger. The latter was made about a year ago. Corinne Luchaire, the star, is the only member of the original cast used in the English version.

Comparison reveals how closely the films have adhered to the original script, a fact that may prove interesting to those who did not realize that films could be made to measure.

The story is about a sternly disciplined reformatory where the girls are made as wretched as possible. One cannot believe this to be a true picture in a modern day and age. However, it serves its dramatic purpose, for a new woman governor with humanitarian ideas is sent to take charge, and the general atmosphere improves gradually until we reach sequences of sunshine and smiles. The reformatory provides a location for an unhappy romance between the governor and the reformatory doctor. This breaks down when the doctor finds that one of the prisoners is more attractive than his first love who has become so busily engaged in reform that she has little time for him. The prisoner discovers the broken romance and nobly renounces the doctor in gratitude for the sympathetic treatment she has received from the new governor. It is all very sad, but it provides a plot.

INTERESTING differences appear in the more atmospheric lighting of the French sets and a greater general restraint in the treatment though not in the acting, which is not surprisingly less reserved than in the Denham version. The opening scene is significant of the two different treatments. It is a courtyard scene where the delinquents are trudging out their daily constitutional. The French version takes recognition of the fact that the girls are girls as well as prisoners: the English version shows them shuffling, slouched automatons. From the pictorial point of view the latter is more impressive, but it is less realistic. This exaggeration for the sake of effect occurs elsewhere but not so innocently. I refer particularly to the scene where the star is dragged into the prison by the guards, her clothes daringly disarrayed. In the French version she is adequately clothed. As this particular scene is emphasized to the extent of providing the subject of much of the poster advertising, one is not surprised that film censors of foreign countries sometimes look on British films with suspicion.

A point of interest is the considerable improvement in the acting of Corinne Luchaire in the later English version. As she is seventeen and the French film was her first, experience does seem to count.

SPACE does not allow a review of the new Marx Brothers film, *Room Service*. I hope their next film will not repeat the same mistakes.

Whether the Marx Brothers accepted a script for which they were not responsible, or, whether, tiring of the old formula, they decided to assay a new one, is difficult to tell. The result reminds one of their stage appearance in London some time ago, when, for some reason or another, they just failed to click.

IN THE BALANCE

The best American and British film criticisms, edited for SEE by H. E. Blyth

Boy Meets Girl

(Lloyd Bacon—Warner Brothers)
Pat O'Brien, James Cagney, Marie Wilson, Ralph Bellamy, Frank McHugh.

Comedy comes to Cagney as the years go on. As one of the paid or lunatic scenarists in *Boy Meets Girl*, he is thoroughly comic. Along with Pat O'Brien, he upsets the whole studio, makes Hollywood seem far wilder than even the wildest dreams of those who never saw it, and, never letting down for a moment, helps to make this one of the successful films of the season. I don't think that Cagney the comic, however, will ever achieve the success of Cagney the scoundrel, the hoodlum, the racketeer. There is possibly a kind of intensity in his countenance and in his manner a nervousness that don't quite belong in the sphere of light humour; but only at times is one aware of this, and his natural competence carries him well through any scene. Doubtless with the years he will grow gayer. He is still too young to be free of care.

The Spewack play just blooms on the screen. Personally I think it's far funnier there than it ever was on the stage. A popular idea that the studios might balk at a film which held them up to such ridicule was never to be taken seriously, of course, the studios being too bright for that. Nothing is spared of the hullabaloo of casting and costuming, of the little waitress whose baby is signed up for pictures even before it is born, of the panic of agents and extras and cowboy stars. It is parody and burlesque, and reality, too.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Boys' Town

(Norman Taurog—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Spencer Tracy, Mickey Rooney.

Boys' Town gets off to a grand start and it keeps its evenly interesting stride so long as Mickey remains the fresh little mug with his guard up against Spencer Tracy's Father Flanagan and the other refining influences of the home. It loses ground and never entirely regains it when the script writers discover they have made Mickey too tough a nut to crack except by resorting to artificial plot leverage. The highway accident involving Pee Wee, his little chum; the bank robbery and kidnapping, the flood of tears in the last reel, strike a too familiar discord. It manages, in spite of the embarrassing sentimentality of its closing scenes, to be a consistently interesting and frequently touching motion picture.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

In *Boys' Town* Spencer Tracy is once more a parson, and again his mild-mannered behaviour and his gentle chiding of wrongdoers has not the faintest touch of the ludicrous about it.

Despite Tracy's excellence, chief honours go to Mickey Rooney as the boy who won't be good. In his former films, Mickey has been a swaggering, grinning, rather obnoxious sort of youngster who would angrily deny that he ever wept. "I ain't a sissy!" he'd snarl—and stamp out. But in *Boys' Town* he cries for several minutes, and very few in any audience will be able to resist a few sympathetic tears. This is young Rooney's best performance to date, and a tremendous performance for a youngster. All of a sudden he has acquired a poise, a sense of proportion, a realisation that mouthing and mugging doesn't make an actor. Perhaps it is the influence of Spencer Tracy, who is noted for the sense of restraint he inspires in those actors who work on the set with him.

—Moore Raymond, *The Sunday Dispatch*

Room Service

(William A. Seiter—RKO-Radio)
The Marx Brothers.

Just by way of gilding the lily, or painting a red nose on it, RKO-Radio has turned loose the mad Marxes upon the helter-skelter comedy known to Broadway last season as *Room Service*. To phrase it moderately, the Marxes haven't made it any funnier; but neither has their presence interfered to any large extent with the disorderly progress of an antic piece. While there may be some question about the play's being a perfect Marx vehicle, there can be none about its being a thoroughly daffy show. The White Way Hotel, where three producers are hanging around on a shoestring, remains a place where anything can happen, and usually does.

The film version is surprisingly close to the play, even to the extent of limiting fully four-fifths of its action to the play's single set —a hotel room. There is a bit of added business at the end, a glimpse of the last act of the plot-hinging play—which justifies our doubts about young Mr. Davis of Oswego—and a telescopic shot of the juveniles romancing on a park bench. Beyond that all is confusion and the inspired nonsense of John Murray and Allan Boretz.

They were writing, you will remember, about the embarrassed producer, his partners and cast of twenty-two who had holed-in at the White Way Hotel and were trying to hold out against a raging hotel executive until a backer could be found for *Hail and Farewell*, the first effort of Davis of Oswego. Since they couldn't meet a backer unless they remained at the hotel, and since they couldn't remain at the hotel unless they paid their bill, and since they couldn't pay their bill unless they found a backer—well, you get it. In polite language, it would be a vicious circle; on Broadway, it would be behind the eight-

ball; in *Room Service* it is the beginning of a siege where everything goes, from measles to synthetic suicides.

There was nothing subtle in the writing; slapstick seldom is; but on the stage it had the advantage of seeming possible. The producing trio did the most incredible things, but did them out of desperation. With the Marx Brothers, absurdities seem always to be wooed for their own sake. That's a weakness of the picture. It does, however, offer compensation by accenting the comic qualities of the presumably non-burlesque characters. Withal, *Room Service* remains a skylark and a comedy to be laughed at moderately if you saw the play, immoderately if you missed it.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

After making a half dozen or so pictures without any appreciable plot structure, the Marx Brothers are suddenly confronted with Hollywood's most expensive script. (RKO paid $255,000 for the screen rights to *Room Service*.) It seems that for that price, the services of George Abbott might have been thrown in. For, in spite of the fact that the Murray-Boretz play is a rip-snorter of a farce in any language, without Mr. Abbott to squeeze the pace out of it, it becomes slow motion. However, non-addicts to the Broadway version will find this screen job funny and refreshing. It is never furious in its new form but it's gay, and the irrepressible Frères Marx play the bankrupt theatrical impresarios with evident ease. The fact that they are held back from some of their more violent histrionics by continuity will probably please more people that it will displease. Only Groucho seems unwilling to enter wholeheartedly into the thing as the producer who keeps his band of stranded players together through famine and insolvency. He goes off only half-cocked. The others, especially Phillip Loeb as a collection agent, are all that you could want. *On the mark.*

—*Stage*

The Adventures of Robin Hood

(Michael Curtiz and William Keighley—First National)
Errol Flynn, Claude Rains, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone.

As an expensive and brightly coloured illustration to Little Arthur's England this will do very well, and it is perhaps not the worse as entertainment because no one can be expected to believe it. Miss Olivia de Havilland, for example, in the part of Maid Marian, makes no attempt to be anything but the heroine of an English comedy, or Mr. Errol Flynn, in the part of Robin Hood, to do anything but give his own version of Mr. Douglas Fairbanks's romantic bravado. Mr. Claude Rains and Mr. Basil Rathbone are able to take their ease in the parts of Prince John and the evil Sir Guy of Gisbourne; after the elaborate scoundrels of modern drama such simple villainy must come as a holiday to them. Anyone who is not hero or villain must, of course, provide comic relief, and a company of fat monks, hearty yeomen, and timorous servants illustrate the lighter side of the Middle Ages. But any more penetrating reconstruction of the past might well distract attention from the processions and pageants, battles and banquets, flags and armour which, photographed "in full Technicolor," are the real and chief concern of the film. The whole is an extensive and gaudy canvas in the manner of nineteenth-century historical painting.

—*The Times*

It must have been an almost superhuman task to make a dull film out of *Robin Hood*, but the Warner Brothers, who have never flinched from major difficulties, have almost managed it. Except for Errol Flynn, who has a pleasant touch with these buckskin heroes, the film seems to me banality on the de luxe scale, a stupendous presentation of the obvious. In fact, I don't know when I have seen more money, more care, and more important workmanship lavished on the pursuit of a happiness that could have been had for a song.

This *Robin Hood*, mind you, is full of good intentions. It isn't a blustery, carefree thing like the old Fairbanks picture, In "full Technicolor," with a pontifical score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, it is less concerned with gay doings beneath the greenwood tree, and Sherwood's preoccupation with sport and catch and nut-brown ale of good October brewing, than with the taxation troubles of the oppressed Saxons—a problem that gibes with Hollywood's vague current sympathy with the underdog, wherever and whoever he may be.

I think the thing that hurt me most about the picture was a remark that I overheard in the lobby after the performance. "That," said one woman to another, "is what happens when a legend like *Robin Hood* is tackled by Americans." Madam, I am sorry to correct you, but this is not necessarily what happens when a legend like *Robin Hood* is tackled by Americans. I have on my shelves an old, fat, green volume, with pages much thumbed by childish hands, and a large unformed signature across the fly-leaf. It is the best story of *Robin Hood* that has ever been written, done in the spare, strong English that puts to shame most of our slipshod modern phrasing. Howard Pyle, an American Quaker, was the author, and his good words cut clean through to the heart of legend. As a child I read it first, with passion, when I was seven. As a journalist I read it still, with humility to-day.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

SEE's Selection

Boys' Town	* *
Pygmalion	* *
The Lady Vanishes	*
St. Martin's Lane	*

Other Films covered in this issue:

Boy Meets Girl (Stars Reserved)

Flashbacks

Prison without Bars

Prison sans Barreaux

Room Service

The Adventures of Robin Hood

Marie Antoinette

Alexander's Ragtime Band

Royal Divorce

Carefree

Blockheads

Strange Mousieur Victor

Pygmalion

(Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard—G.F.D.)
Leslie Howard, Wendy Hiller.

The talkiest of talkies (and wordiness is what the cinema diehards fear most from Mr. Shaw) *Pygmalion* shows that the right sort of talk is of as much importance as any other quality in the making of motion pictures. Here the dialogue is a treat to listen to. It is alive with the author's flashing perverseness, its wit is provocative and stimulating, and whenever it condescends to the commonplace there is invariably a point in view. It avoids sheer farce because Eliza, bewildered, tempted, and more and more uneasily conscious that she is growing into a woman whom it will hurt to be cast aside when the Professor has achieved his triumph, is too real in herself to be a figure of fun. After this performance, Wendy Hiller is undeniably a star. Eliza Doolittle, of course, is a peach of a part—but a peach to be treated with the utmost sensitiveness if it is to retain its bloom.

—A. T. Borthwick, *The News Chronicle*

Pygmalion is a treat for the connoisseur of fine acting and good dialogue. In these respects it is probably the best British film ever made. You would hardly expect a Shaw play to make real cinema, but even the cinema purist must admit that its shortcomings are compensated for by the brilliant acting and the chance to hear really first-class dialogue in a picture.

Wendy Hiller has high-cheek bones and an upper lip that sticks out a bit like Chevalier's lower one. You would not call her a conventional screen beauty. But in animation her face reflects a lovely sincerity and warm youthfulness that serves her well when her turn comes to canvass your sympathy for the girl who has been tricked out of her station. As the untidy, raucous flower-girl jeering at the sober professor and his ideas; as the automaton-like pupil learning to speak properly; as the lovely sedate but very nervous young woman who is imposed on a social gathering, and as the bitter, accusing, scornful, disillusioned subject of the experiment who has fallen in love with her teacher, Wendy Hiller displays a remarkable variety of resources, handling comedy and sadness with charm and tremendous effect.

—A. Jympson Harman, *The Evening News*

Marie Antoinette

(W. S. Van Dyke—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Norma Shearer, Tyrone Power, Robert Morley, John Barrymore.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer admit that they expect certain criticisms from the more ruthless purists of a few scenes in *Marie Antoinette* which depart from historical exactitude. Equally frankly, they admit that the purists are right—according to their lights.

Marie Antoinette, which has involved more care in research work, and in accuracy to the last detail of costume, make-up, and so on, than any other film ever made, contains some scenes which do not occur in the history books (which does not necessarily mean that they did not occur in real life).

Here is what one of the authors of the screen play, and its famous director, W. S. Van Dyke, have to say about this, in a cable received to-day from Hollywood:—

"Most difficult problem confronting us starting work on *Antoinette* was compressing into two hours a long vivid, eventful period of history," says Claudine West, who collaborated with Donald Ogden Stewart and Ernest Vajda on the screen play. "The creation of an important motion picture is a job of work requiring adherence to dramatic tenets and one not automatically dovetailing history. In our case these two elements were often at odds, and it became a matter of compromise. We reached the belief that if we could retain the feeling and spirit of those times and people we could achieve reality, though we occasionally circumvented historical accuracy. For example, we had often to compress into shorter periods events which actually took decades."

W. S. Van Dyke says: "After reading the script of Stefan Zweig's biography, and the research material, I knew all that was essential for me to know about the historic background. History itself was for my purposes relatively unimportant. It was people that interested me. I liked the script because the story was told simply, not so much in terms of history, but in terms of people who made history. We spared no effort to make the picture historically authentic in spirit; but our primary purpose was to create entertainment, not to give a history lecture. To-day's audiences demand speed and action in pictures. I faced one especially serious problem—to compress a period, from the opening with Marie Antoinette as a girl, through her first years of gay, giddy, extravagant life; her development into womanhood as Queen of France; and the crushing tragedy of her later years. It was necessary for each transition that make-up and costume be logical, and seem natural to the audience."

And thus the art director, Cedric Gibbons: "Mansart, when building Versailles, thoughtlessly failed to realize that the Palace might some day be a motion picture background. As a result, the Palace did not lend itself to cinematograph filming; and I was obliged to create an impressive entrance hall and grand staircase matching the decorative feeling of the Mansart originals. The authentic gallery, with rich marbles and gorgeous apartments, was impossible photographically, being 320 feet long, and only 35 feet wide, which, to moviegoers, would be merely a tunnel. When we designers have to lie a little, we sit between the Scylla of a few architectural cranks, and the Charybdis of the great mass of cinemagoers who take their historical buildings only vaguely, but frequently form positive impressions. In taking liberties, we must steer a course between extremes."

—*A Statement by M.G.M.*

Alexander's Ragtime Band

(Henry King—20th Century-Fox)
Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Ethel Merman, Jack Haley.

The pleasantest prodding of the memory that a motion picture has accomplished. Irving Berlin's career, which got off to a heigh-ho start in 1911 with the publication of *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, conscientiously covers every event of sentimental importance from that year to the present one—a fact made spectacularly dramatic by this production. The significance of his tunes can be judged by the stalwart progression of a plot that is no more than a series of night-club appearances of the leading players. It is the music which makes *Alexander's Ragtime Band* a show to be seen as well as heard. The nostalgia is gentle, and the humour is allowed to flow naturally from the incongruity of customs and costumes of a bygone day. Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, Ethel Merman, Jack Haley, and those innumerable singers who enter so gloriously into the spirit of the thing—these and Director Henry King are to be congratulated for sustaining a vitality that is not supplied in the sketchy plottings of the script. The continuous undertone of melodies that are invariably associated with pleasure give the picture great sentimental power. And the singing of these tunes is always full and spontaneous and spirited. In other words, here is a fine tribute to Mr. Berlin and a fine treat to everybody else: *His music hath charms indeed.*

—*Stage*

A Royal Divorce

(Jack Raymond—Paramount)
Pierre Blanchar, Ruth Chatterton, Frank Cellier.

It is not any tampering with historical truth that lifts this film into the ranks of the sublimely silly, but its extraordinary casting, dialogue and direction. No one could have failed to recognize a fine actress in the Fran Dodsworth of Ruth Chatterton, nor will Pierre Blanchar's genius be doubted by those who saw *Crime et Châtiment* and *Carnet de Bal*. But nothing can reconcile us to a Josephine who is just a plump, mischievous Southern belle and a Bonaparte with an accent and a lisp. When they meet, he tells her fortune: "I see a mawwaige with one of the gweat ones of Fwance." Hearing his name, her brows knit in a puzzled American frown: "How d'ya spell it?" she asks. When she has sung him a Creole song or two and leant, with dangerous coquetry, upon the raised lid of the harpsichord, the trick is done. On his wedding night, however, Napoleon gets a raw deal: chased off the historic four-poster by Josephine's pet dog, he has to curl up, still booted and spurred, on a very short settee. A good scene of the Bonaparte family squabbling just before his coronation is followed by Josephine's suggestion that the girls will soon consent to carry her train if their brothers are promised kingdoms. "A good idea!" says Napoleon; "Spain, Naples, Rome; yes, just enough to go round." After the ceremony, "It was a beautiful day," remarks the Empress Fran, "and I certainly did enjoy myself." Period flavour: Josephine still clings to her harpsichord at Malmaison in 1813, six years after Beethoven's *Apassionata*. Solitary compensation: Frank Cellier's smooth and subtle Talleyrand. Conclusion: *not* suitable for exhibition to adult audiences.

—Peter Galway,
The New Statesman and Nation

The Lady Vanishes

(Alfred Hitchcock—Gainsborough)
Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas, Dame May Whitty, Cecil Parker, Linden Travers, Mary Clare.

If I have sometimes been rather more critical of Alfred Hitchcock's work than most of my colleagues, for the simple reason that I value his intelligence and my own, that makes it all the more agreeable to be able to say that *The Lady Vanishes* is his best picture. I would go further and say that it is easily the best thriller ever made in this country.

Much of Mr. Hitchcock's work has been spoiled for me by his undisguised, outrageous cynicism. Was a situation impossible? Well, the poor fish out in front would never notice it. Were the characters illogical? Who cared? Was a scene obviously dragged in for the camera effects? What did that matter so long as the effects were good?

At his best he is vivid, exciting, funny, a master of the technique of telling an incident, if not exactly a story, with the maximum of visual impact. At his worst you feel that somebody with seven disconnected and entirely different stories is trying to hammer them into your head with a blunt instrument. In *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, for instance, there were at least ten things that couldn't or wouldn't happen. But if they didn't happen the story stopped, so Mr. Hitchcock just went blandly on, and I have no doubt that if you mentioned them he would just smile that slow, guileless smile of his and point out that on both sides of the Atlantic *The Man Who Knew Too Much* pleased millions. And isn't that what pictures are for? Well, yes. But there is no reason why you shouldn't please the millions who don't care and the millions who do, if you only take enough trouble with the plot; and this is what has happened with *The Lady Vanishes*.

Don't misunderstand me. The story is no masterpiece. Fundamentally it is neither better nor worse than a thousand others of the

this-spy-must-not-pass-the-frontier-with-the papers school. Where it is good, uncommonly good, is in the characterisation. How much of it belongs to the original novel, *The Wheel Spins*, how much (obviously a great deal) has been supplied by those two brilliant script writers, Sidney Gilliatt and Frank Launder, and how much has been developed by Mr. Hitchcock on the set I do not know. To the public it is unimportant, anyway. All that matters is that once the yarn gets going, after a somewhat slow start, it moves rapidly, excitingly and not implausibly, to its climax, with a hundred effective incidents by the way.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Carefree

(Mark Sandrich—R.K.O. Radio)
Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Ralph Bellamy.

Purveyors of psychoanalysis will undoubtedly note that Hollywood's treatment of psychiatry resembles closely its treatment of a good alcoholic spree. Thus, in an analysis of this plot, it will be necessary to substitute the words "hypnosis" and "subconscious" for the words "binge" and "hangover." Into Dr. Fred Astaire's office stalks as normal and uncomplex a patient as ever consulted a psychoanalyst. But a whiff of ether and a wave of the hand before the eyes, and Ginger Rogers weaves away with hilarious results (you see, no binge, just hypnosis). The plot consists in Miss Rogers' getting out of one engagement into another, and more agreeable, one. The gaiety consists in some expert comedy by Miss Rogers and some acceptable repartee by the six writers listed. The excitement consists of three superlatively novel dances—a golf sequence by Mr. Astaire which will leave you gasping with admiration, a slow-motion dance and a Yam session that are definitely in the groove. The music is by a composer of whom you may have heard, Irving Berlin. This all adds up to hallelujah. Substract a slight ennui of narrative, and you have the correct score. *Ginger Rogers can throw a stone through our window any time she wants to.*

—*Stage*

Flashbacks

Mr. C. B. Cochran calls his *Flashbacks* "a century of shows on the screen," and points out that he has designed it, not as a history, but "just as an entertainment." His idea is to stick, without any guying, to the style of the presentation of the period. He has no commentator. The early scenes, beautifully hand-coloured magic lantern slides of the 1830's, are shown in complete silence. The primitive cinematograph reels that follow have the dear old piano in the orchestra pit playing the familiar syrupy and martial numbers to be found in all the showmen's handbooks of the period. By the time we reach Blanche Sweet in a one-reel drama, *If We Only Knew*, a small cinema orchestra slides wooingly into the melodies. There are "effects" off, and once, in the early section, a whiskered and frock-coated soloist takes the stage with a discreet spotlight on him.

The performance runs for two hours and covers, in a necessarily rather perfunctory way, the range of shows popular between 1838 and 1938 with audiences in this country. The later sections, from 1916 to the present day, are exclusively newsreel pictures, covering every topic, from the signing of the Peace Treaty at Versailles to Don Bradman's first appearance in England, and leading up to a dramatic curtain on the freshest newsreel records of the hour.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Blockheads

(John G. Blystone—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Laurel and Hardy.

It would have been pleasant to say a friendly farewell to Laurel and Hardy, who have just made their last joint bow. But candour compels me to admit that *Blockheads* is very, very dull. Slowness was always the essence of their clowning, but here it invades the framework as well; situations are laboriously prepared, and yield after all no more than a kick in the pants. Still their style of humour was a link with the cinema's absurd, happy childhood; and in the past they have been very funny. Do you remember a short in which they coaxed a pianola up an interminable flight of stone steps? Good-bye, Laurel; good-bye, Hardy; I shall remember you as two immobile and silent figures gazing sadly at that pianola, as, for the tenth time, it bumped melodiously down and down.

—Peter Galway,
The New Statesman and Nation

The Strange Monsieur Victor

(Jean Gremillon—French)
Raimu, Pierre Blanchar.

Though such people have actually existed, it is difficult for a film to make a complete study of the character of a man who leads a double life; a most respectable tradesman who in his spare time is a professional criminal. The adjustments of such a character are surely too intricate for proper expression in this medium, but the film manages very well by concentrating on the tradesman, the family man, and the sentimentalist, merely suggesting at moments the strain that results from his life of crime. It is exactly the part for Raimu, and he makes a wonderful shopkeeper, incomparably bourgeois and self-satisfied. It is as good as a holiday in France to see him selling to a widow, for a photograph of her dead husband, one of those frames covered in sea-shells which abound in the shops of Toulon. And Toulon itself, where most of the action takes place, is brilliantly described, with exactly the right degree of objectivity, though it would have been agreeable to have seen rather more of Puget's architecture. There is also a quite elaborate plot, for the shopkeeper commits a murder, allows another man to go to prison for it, and then shelters him when he escapes. All this is very well done, without either sensationalism or false sentiment, and M. Pierre Blanchar, in the part of the innocent victim, displays as always a disturbing vitality, though it is not a part which requires the use of all his talents.

—*The Times*

NOVEMBER RELEASES

SEE's Choice

Boy from Barnardo's (M.-G.-M.) * *
DIRECTOR: Sam Wood
STARRING: Freddie Bartholomew, Mickey Rooney, Herbert Mundin
(Reviewed September)

Doctor Rhythm (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Frank Tuttle
STARRING: Bing Crosby, Beatrice Lillie, Mary Carlisle

Professor Beware (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Elliot Nugent
STARRING: Harold Lloyd, Phyllis Welch, Raymond Walburn
(Reviewed August)

Shopworn Angel (M.-G.-M.)
DIRECTOR: H. C. Potter
STARRING: Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Walter Pidgeon
(Reviewed September)

Other Releases include :

Adventures of Marco Polo (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: Archie Mayo
STARRING: Gary Cooper, Basil Rathbone, Sigrid Gurie
(Reviewed October)

Challenge (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: Milton Rosmer
STARRING: Luis Trenker, Robert Douglas
(Reviewed July)

Crowd Roars (M.-G.-M.)
DIRECTOR: Richard Thorpe
STARRING: Robert Taylor, Edward Arnold, Maureen O'Sullivan
(Reviewed October)

Goldwyn Follies (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: George Marshall
STARRING: Adolphe Menjou, Ritz Brothers, Andrea Leeds, Kenny Baker
(Reviewed April)

Heart of Arizona (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Lesley Selander
STARRING: William Boyd, George Hayes, Russell Hayden

Kidnapped (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Alfred Werker
STARRING: Warner Baxter, Freddie Bartholomew, Arleen Whelan
(Reviewed September)

Vivacious Lady (R.K.O. Radio)
DIRECTOR: George Stevens
STARRING: Ginger Rogers, James Stewart

Face of Scotland (*Realist*) *Wealth of a Nation* (*Strand*)

SCOTTISH TESTAMENT

Scotland screened truthfully for the first time, in seven new short films, says RITCHIE CALDER

TIME was when I shed tears on leaving Scotland. Time now is when I feel like shedding them when I go back.

For problems of Scotland are as intense and urgent as the tone of Harry Watt's commentary on *Wealth of a Nation*. The soul of a nation is in pawn. And only Scotland can redeem it.

That is why the Films of Scotland series is one of the most important contributions of documentary. The screen has become the pulpit of a new Reformation, the film the modern John Knox. And maybe they will rouse Scotsmen to sign a new Covenant.

Of the seven, *Wealth of a Nation* is to me the most important. It challenges where I, more uncouthly, might condemn. It shows the Scotland which gave the world the Industrial Revolution, which pledged its destiny to coal, iron and steel; the Scotland of James Watt, Adam Smith and the ruthless industrialist; the Clydeside which drained the manhood of Scotland into the shipyards, to build the ships of the Seven Seas; Scotland blackened by prosperity.

And it shows that Scotland in decline, shackled with the steel chains of its own making to the heavy industries it created. Shipyards derelict. Its steel industry migrating like its people to the hopeful South. Its jute industry, alien to the country and a fading tribute to its skill, competing with Indian mills which Scottish craftsmen equipped in the Hooghli and the Ganges.

Almost too late, Scotsmen begin to think again, to plan new industries which belong to a new age, to harness its water-power to electricity, to turn from heavy metals to aluminium, to build satellite towns to replace the concentration camps of the industrial lowlands.

Stuart Legg and Donald Alexander have shown a new Scotland in embryo, but I fear me it is still unborn. Scotsmen themselves must father it. And it will not be born with James Watt's spoon in its mouth.

The *Face of Scotland* is turning to the sun, but it is still shadowed with coal smoke. Basil Wright goes back to the Romans, tries, and, I believe, succeeds, to show the rugged soul of a country which resisted invasion, annealed itself in the hell-fire of John Knox and the icy waters of Calvinism, sturdy, independent and unyieldingly democratic. He reminds us of the Scotland of the meagre meal-poke, which bred philosophers out of half-starved students and made skilled craftsmen out of ghillies. But the best unspoken commentary on modern Scotland is the football crowd. Scottish character may be reflected there, but it is housed in stunted if wiry bodies the legacy of sun-robbed, ill-fed, slum-housed Industrial Scotland.

As a product of the vaunted educational system of Scotland, the first national, all-for-all, educational system in the world, I wanted to cheer Alexander Shaw's *The Children's Story*. For Scotland's success in education, like its success in industry and the ruling of Empires, threatens to be its undoing. It has been too loyal to John Knox. An education founded on religion became itself a religion. And the dispassionate lens of the camera may make even Scotsmen see their fallacies.

The film recalls the familiar grind, the learning for learning's sake, the force-fed scholars swallowing education whole. And it reveals the new conception, the equipping of the children for modern life, the school-feeding, the psychological clinics, the turning away from the academic grind of the past to the needs of the future. Fine!

Pathé has taken the hard-pressed fishing industry for its theme but the general impression was much more optimist than reality. *Sea Food* is *à la maison* served up with too appetising sauce.

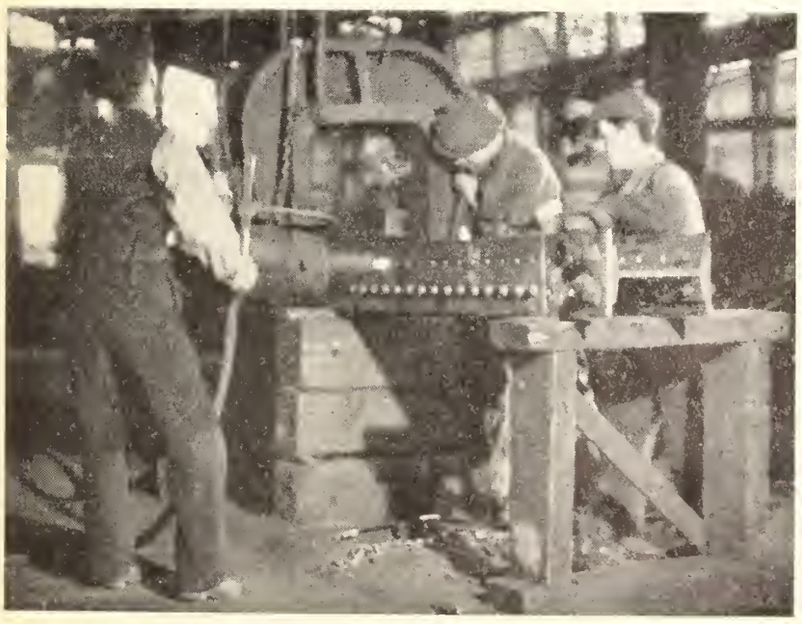
But Mary Field and G.B.I. in *They Made the Land* have told me a lot I did not know. Foot by foot, peat by peat, the Scots are shown wresting their fields from grudging soil. They struggled for hundreds of years, stripping the peat from the soil, battling the winds and the sand and fighting the bracken and the thistles. That fight still goes on. It is another challenge to Scotland. But the commentary with its inversions, repetitions and continual plucking of the same string might have been good if it had not been overdone. It is a kind of linguistic hiccups, or a surfeit of radishes.

Scotland for Fitness and *Sport in Scotland* are appendices to thought-provoking programme, outriders of what I regard as a film crusade.

This series will tell the world of the other side of Scotland, tear away the tartan curtains of romance and show a nation fighting for its existence.

And I hope it will rouse the Scotsmen themselves.

P.S. But why Lister? Twice he is claimed as one of the great Scots. He was born at Upton in Essex.



Wealth of a Nation (Strand)

They Made the Land (G.B.I.)

COCK A

Written b

"Did you put the cat out?"

Our Casting Department

Hamlet	Joe E. Brown
Claudius	C. Aubrey Smith (of course)
Ophelia	The Marx Brothers
Queen	The Ritz Brothers
Polonius	C. Aubrey Smith (of course)
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern	John Barrymore
Horatio	Bobby Breen
Laertes	Mickey Rooney
Courtiers, Gallants, Gravediggers, Soldiers, Sailors, etc.	Spencer Tracy

Homage to Gable

By William Shakespear

Hark! Hark! The Clark at Heaven's gate sings
And payrolls 'gin to rise. . . .

"I think I'm going to sneeze"

PRESSMEN'S BENEFIT

We have just patented yet another labour-saving device for which all our Brothers of the Pen (copyright by Reuter, Press Association and Central News) will, we are sure, be as grateful as any set of hard-boiled skunks (no offence taken where none meant) are able to be. It is very simple—just a Form, similar to those used by Government Departments for Motor Licences and what not, which can be filled in at leisure, thus saving the Newspaper Boys those shivering waits at Southampton, while the *Berengaria* docks, or, worse still, those press-receptions in Park Lane.

Here it is:

Note. This form, when completed, should be sent (postage pre-paid) to the Editor, the Daily Tale, c/o Dusty's Snack Bar, Fleet Street.

ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED.

1. Name in full (if no name, enclose photograph).
2. Sex (if none, write "NONE").
3. Have you a contract? (If none, use your discretion.)
4. With what firm? (Don't be silly.)
5. Do you know what B.O. is? (Be careful.)
6. What do you think of:
   Our Policemen?
   Our Licensing hours?
   Our Fans?
   Our Hitchcock?
   St. Paul's?
   (*Cross out those not applicable.*)
7. Are you being interviewed: (*a*) in State Room? (*b*) on gangway? (*c*) or a dainty apartment looking out over the trees and A.R.P. trenches of Hyde Park? If the latter, what is there to drink?
8. (For male candidates only.) (*a*) Are you married? engaged? or both? (*b*) What's your gag—toughery, romance or just plain dumb? (Candidates must on no account attempt more than one gag.)
8. (For female candidates only.) Do you (*a*) swing a slender ankle; (*b*) cat marrons glacés; (*c*) spik Englcesh? (as far as we are concerned, candidates may attempt the lot.)
9. How long are you staying? If so, why?
10. Are you aware that a similar form to this has been sent to your worst rival, who arrived two hours earlier than you did?
11. What's it worth to you to have (his/her) story jerked? (Cheques should be left open, wide open. We will fill in the amount)
12. If you can't write or read, you'd better call the whole thing off.

Signature

(Don't be afraid, it's not a contract.)

Date

LORUM

CARLOS MARSDEN

Did You Know—

That expert scientists have proved that if a film critic were to smile his face would crack and fall off?

That if Mr. Samuel Goldwyn were laid end to end his braces would burst?

That every time a film is made about Queen Victoria a million begonias clap their petals and shout "Goody!"?

That Odeons can be planted in any herbaceous border at any time of the year?

That the lump in a producer's throat is put there to prevent him swallowing his words?

That there is no lump of any sort in a distributor's throat?

That the Editor won't stand for any more of this?

★ ★ ★

In re Danielle Darrieux—
I could almost marrieux.

Jam Session at the British Board of Film Censors

"Once again Miss Dietrich, please"

WITHOUT COMMENT

"Korda was beaten in the Midland Nursery because he did not stay a yard more than six furlongs. At that point he was out clear, but weakened rapidly. The field cut up rather badly, and odds were laid on Korda."
(*From the Racing Column of an evening paper*)

A Few Song Titles

"If you're waking, call me Shirley,
For I'm to be Queen of the Mae."

"My old Deutsch."

"For the Rainer she Rainereth every day."

"I TANK I FLY--"

We are asked to state that the rumour that Greta Garbo is to play the part of Neville Chamberlain in a new version of *The Moon and Sixpence* is entirely without foundation.

★ ★ ★

I wish
The Sisters Gish
Not to manson
Gloria Swanson—
Were still acting.
Life would be less exacting.

GARBO on SUNDAYS

by Russell Ferguson

By a Man about Town

A few notes on the most famous woman in the world.

I may be forty-two round the waist. I may be more than forty-two round the clock. But I am not so old, thank Heaven, that I am past shedding a tear for unrequited love and star crossed lives.

Your uncle is half-way along Wardour Street, when he meets up with Barney Brewster, who kept a pub before the war at the palace end of St. James's Street, when palaces were palaces, and pubs were pubs.

Hello, sez I. Hello, sez he. Witheraway, sez I. To the movies, sez he. Right, sez I, I'll come with you. Sez you, sez he. Sez I, sez me. And off we goes.

Well, we sees Greta Garbo in Marie Walewska.

Your uncle has been in love twice and once ere now. You might never think it to look at him. In fact sometimes I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror, when I can see past my cigar, and wonder at it myself. But there it is. Nobody loves a fat man, but gee! how a fat man can love!

I will not deny that when I came out of the cinema I had a tear in my eye. I have had too many misfortunes myself not to feel the misfortunes of others. There was the time at St. Quentin when the sniper hit the rum. . . . There was the time at Bapaume when the rum, alas, hit me.

"Some take of the misfortunes which mortals may befall,
But Hi, me bucks, and Ho, me hearties,
I have had them all."

But I talk of myself too much. Let's change the subject. Let's talk about my new hat.

By the Voice of England

She crosses from New York to Stockholm, and anon from Stockholm to New York.

There is a lesson here for this country. Where does our allegiance lie? Where is our destiny? Where is our future?

Make no mistake, this country can and must, should and will, read the lesson of the star. We must learn while there is yet time ere it is too late. (This journal has again and again warned the country against the fatal error of turning our backs to the East and facing the West. This journal has again and again warned the country against the still more fatal error of turning our backs to the West and facing the East.)

This journal has again and again warned the country against the third course of changing front rapidly and vacillating weakly from one side to the other, facing now East, now West.

Surely the answer is obvious? Surely before it is too late we shall and will acknowledge where our natural destiny must and shall lie?

Once and for all, then: we must make ourselves strong, and take our stand—facing four-square to the world. Not facing this way, not facing that way, but in our inexorable might and majesty FACING BOTH WAYS.

This is the lesson of the star. This is the lesson that we can and must learn. Let us rise in our might and cry, we will and shall, we can and must, we may, can, must, might, could, would, should.

For if not, the alternative is plain. If this lesson is not learned, and learned now, and learned for ever, the history of our time will come to be written in the most terrible words the ear of man has ever heard, the eye of man has even seen. Simple words fraught with the deepest, blackest terror. MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN, ARMAGEDDON, MORATORIUM, MEGATHERIUM, MILLENIUM, ALUMINIUM, PANDEMONIUM.

By a Flower

I left the theatre in tears. Let scoffers scoff, let detractors detract. When I had seen Greta Garbo in Marie Walewska, I was in tears. I am not ashamed to admit it.

I knelt down in the foyer to give thanks for a good woman. The smart Mayfair crowd leaving the theatre passed me by on either side. As I looked at them out of the corner of my eye, I could not but feel that each one of them would have given his all to be kneeling by my side. But human beings are shy creatures. It is not given to us all to give way, simply and honestly, to our feelings. These thoughts passed through my mind as I knelt in prayer.

When they had all gone, I got up and went out into the street. Smart Mayfair crowds were gathered round a bus stop in Piccadilly. I knelt down on the pavement.

A policeman came and asked, in his simple way, what I was doing. I told him I was giving thanks for a good woman. He turned away for a few minutes, and when I saw his face, there were tears in his eyes.

When the crowds had all gone away, I went home. There I knelt down again, beside my bed, and in front of me I had two photographs—my own, and Greta Garbo's. As I prayed, I saw them dimly through a mist of tears. I could not tell which was which.

All was still, except for the sound of a wee mouse behind the wainscot. Come out and pray, wee mouse, I said, Come out and give thanks for a good woman. But the wee mouse ran away.

I went to bed. As I was falling asleep, I felt a hand caress my cheek, and another hand caress my brow. The hand on my cheek was my own, but it seemed to me that the hand on my brow was Greta Garbo's.

Or perhaps it was the other way round. I shall never know.

CULTURE with the CAN-CAN

The Gas Industry's new films combine education with entertainment in a new way, says S. E. R. WYNNE

"H'EDUCATION *plus* h'entertainment!" And my word, wasn't he right, that old gentleman who stood on the sidewalk and acted as public relations officer for the proprietors of a now defunct cinema at Brighton!

Education *plus*: that's What the Public Wants.

Education is not popular. Which is a pity, because, like *foie gras* and Sunday Mornings in Bed, it is undoubtedly a Good Thing. Nevertheless, it can be popularised; and nowhere is a good hand more assured than when the popularisation is done by way of the short film. Well done, that is. Well done, as it was in *Night Mail*, *Coal Face*, *Men Against the Sea*, *Children at School*, *Nutrition*, *Housing Problems*.

A lot of gas films there; but then a public utility so alive to cultural functions which even its sales department need not be scared of deserves a credit line. And now it offers another foursome of new films, two at least certain to rate high in the libraries.

Education, as we are saying, can be popularised. It is in *Plan for Living* which puts practical dietetics on the screen and leaves Boulestin in the back kitchen in its treatment of how to buy the right foods and, having bought them, how to use them properly.

Here is our old friend Mr. Julian Huxley commentating to a sort of near-Disney symphony in which the three essentials of nutrition are presented by cartoon figures of a builder (for and on behalf of the body-building foods), a policeman (the protective foods), and a stoker (the energy-giving foods).

Here is Mr. Huxley still commentating as stoker, builder, policeman call up their armies of protein and calory; cartoons dissolve into flesh-and-blood lilliputs, six inches high; and lettuce and cheese and meat and butter and milk and eggs (in diamante and chiffon) swing into a sort of Beeton ballet.

It is a perky three-in-one: a silly symphony, a musical, a screen Mrs. Beeton (with a bit of Cecil, too). It is also education *plus*.

While Mrs. Newlywed's eyes are popping like Cantor's at little figures cavorting on her kitchen table—and swinging it in a casserole in a cooker (nice trick work, this) for a finale which produces an enthusiastic audience at the dinner table—Mrs. Newlywed is learning.

PAUL ROTHA, with *New Worlds for Old*, had a different piece of work to do.

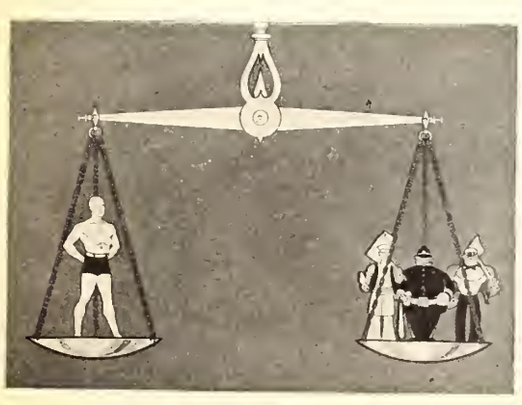
He had to show, simply, the history of gas from the early nineteenth century to the present day and, not so simply, how gas has met the challenge of electricity. These two things he achieves in a documentary impressive as a picture of a transformed Britain and as a record of an industry alive to its purpose in contemporary society.

Taking a cue from (and tilting it at) the current fashion for Victorians, he sets off with some vivid Victorian sequences, beginning with well-covered chorus ladies dancing the Can-Can to the flicker of naked gas jets. Exciting history, this. But the film really moves when electricity, straddling the countryside with its steel pylons, arrives to confound the old ideas; a switch to challenge the tap.

Here Rotha uses, from Living Newspaper, the voice of the unseen critic to interrupt Alistair Cooke's well-spoken commentary and big and little people to show what one industry's handling of new social customs, new ways of living, means to the community.

New Worlds for Old, nearly titled *Public Statement Number One*, marks the first occasion on which an industry has by documentary film told its own story, faithfully and fairly. And, when you come to think of it, daringly. For it takes something more than skilful presentation to pick up a challenge like electricity's to gas, decide your answer, and make of it a picture that will satisfy the curious mind as well as the casual eye. Here it is done.

The two other films do not claim for themselves more than the place of competent fillers. Cavalcanti's *Happy in the Morning* is slick and gay and brings Henry Hall and his band as a useful ally to hot water publicity. *Warming Up* is as pleasant a way as any to be reminded that in this England some form of heat is needed on 210 days out of 365. In two words, education *plus*.



"DELETE ALL SHOTS OF CAN-CAN DANCE"

wrote the Censor on his red slip when he saw NEW WORLDS FOR OLD. "Too erotic to be shown in this country," said the Board's Secretary in an interview. SEE reminds the forgetful old gentlemen of Carlyle House that they have passed so many films with Can-Can girl scenes that we can only remember 'Evergreen,' 'Lady of the Boulevards,' 'L'Atlantide' and 'The Girl from Maxim's.' It appears that the flesh, silk stockings and suspenders of show girls to-day are fun to the Censor but the frou-frou skirts and woollen stockings of the '90's' are just degenerate.

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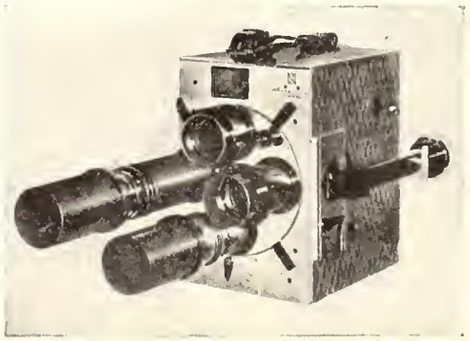

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Seamy Side Song Hits

Newest Song and Swing Records reviewed by STAN PATCHETT

Sing me a song of social significance
Sing me of wars and sing me of bread lines,
Sing me of front page news. . . .

You'll find not only social significance, but catchy melodies and astringent lyrics in the four numbers on Brunswick records from *Pins and Needles*, the amateur revue staged by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, that became (and still is) a Broadway smash hit.

The four numbers are *Sing me a Song of Social Significance*, sung by Kay Weber and one Sonny Schulyer, backed by *Chain Store Daisy*, sung by Ruth Rubenstein (Brunswick 02616-A) and *One Big Union for Two*, duet by Weber and Schulyer, backed by *Nobody Makes a Pass At Me*, a lament by Mildred Weitz (Brunswick 02617-B.). Accompaniments are on two pianos by composer Harold Rome and Baldwin Bergesen.

The Misses Weitz and Rubenstein are two humble garment workers who took time off between sewing buttons to record their little penetrating pieces for the microphone, but sad to relate, Miss Weber and Mr. Schulyer are honey-voiced song birds from the commercial air waves doing a little vocal blacklegging.

It's nice to ponder over the fact that the garment lassies walk away with both the vocal and showmanship honours. Mildred's *Nobody Makes a Pass At Me* is an unpolished gem of proletarian sophistication in the Dorothy Parker manner, minus Miss Parker's now rather tiresome clichés. With a heavy and puzzled heart, Mildred sighs and sings:

"Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Nobody makes a pass at me?
I use Ovaltine and Listerine, Barbasol and Mistarol, Lifebuoy Soap and Flit.
So why ain't I got 'IT'?
I use Coca Cola and Marsola, Crisco, Lexco and Marmola, Ex-Lax and Vapex.
So why ain't I got SEX?"

It took those hard working union members a year of rehearsals, threaded between sewing hours, to get those *Pins and Needles* stuck into the right places, but the result was more than worth their trouble, the only surprise being that they hadn't done it years before.

For obvious reasons, *Four Little Angels of Peace*, the hit number of the show, hasn't been released here. The scene shows Mussolini, Hitler, Eden and a Japanese general, dressed in haloes and wings, slyly shooting and stabbing each other in the back with machine guns and daggers, concealed beneath their heavenly robes. All sing sweetly:

Four little angels of peace are we,
There is one thing on which we agree.
With foe or with friend,
We will fight to the end.
Just for Peace! Peace! Peace!

A few weeks ago Angel Adolf Hitler was given some new lines to sing:

Now I've got the Sudeten,
There's no need for waitin'
Jawohl, all my plans are now surer.
It will be hotsy totsy
To make the world Nazi,
Under Adolf, the house-paintin' Fuhrer.

Are you listening, Mr. Coward and Mr. Porter?

FIND a negro swing musican with a French name and you can be practically sure he was born in New Orleans within sound of the first despairing wail of the birth of jazz.

Sidney "Pops" Bechet, grand-daddy of the clarinet and now little used soprano sax, is an outstanding example.

Now well over 50, "Pops" still has plenty on the swing ball and is to be heard on Brunswick 02652-B in *Viper Mad*, the tale of a weed addict vocalised by O'Neill Spencer, and *Sweet Patootie*, the swingy legend of a lady who lived down by the jail, with a sign on her door reading *Sweet Patootie For Sale*.

Bechet was playing an old clarinet, held together by elastic and chewing gum, when he was 12 years of age. At 14 he was with the famous "Olympians" lead by the then supreme "Big Eye" Louis Nelson, now almost forgotten in jazz history. Big Eye Louis retired from jazz, or ragtime as it was known then, as early back as 1910, long before the Dixieland Jazz Band came on the scene.

Stocky Sidney got his break when three boys out of the Olympians got a job on the notorious Barbary Coast and took him along with them. It's a fact that swing hit the Barbary Coast long before it was ever heard of in the Eastern states of America.

Playing cornet in the band was Joe "King" Oliver. Years later, Oliver was to make swing history with a band that had Louis Armstrong on third trumpet.

In 1915, Sidney moved to Chicago and joined Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra. Cook's band astounded all those who heard it. It toured Europe and is credited in America with introducing jazz for the first time at the Philharmonic Hall in London.

1925 found Bechet in Paris playing in the pit of a revue featuring Josephine Baker. A year later he joined Noble Sissle's famous band, and has remained with Sissle ever since. Accompanying him on his new records are a bunch of boys from the Sissle band.

Sidney Bechet's pure tone and obvious musical sincerity is something well worth studying in this age of swing copyists who all went to play like somebody else—Benny Goodman for example.

THE swing band's return to melody is more noticeable than ever this month, practically half the releases being based on former melodic pops or new compositions.

Two outstanding novelty recordings (I hope that's the right word) are Fats Waller's organ solos *Deep River* and *Go Down Moses*, on H.M.V. B8816 and Mr. Bing Crosby and Mr. Johnny Mercer explaining just what swing is in a wow version of that old favourite *Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean* on Brunswick 02653-B.

COLEMAN HAWKINS AND HIS ALL STAR "JAM" BAND.—*Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Out of Nowhere*. Swing from Paris and the best that jazz has to offer. The Hawk's solo in *Out of Nowhere* represents the King of the tenor sax at his inspired top. (H.M.V.-B8812).

THE MILT HERTH TRIO.—*Toy Trumpet* and *Looney Little Tooney*; Hammond organ, piano and drums combine to produce a "noise" that's nice on the ears and definitely swingy in spots. If only cinema organs were played like this! (Brunswick 02651).

(*Continued on page* 324)

Swing Records Reviewed
(*continued from page* 323)

LEONARD FEATHER AND YE OLDE ENGLISH SWYNGE BAND—*Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes* and *Early One Morning*; Record critic, Leonard Feather has definitely struck on something novel in swing with his treatment of two tradition-soaked ballads. (Decca F6810).

TEDDY WILSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*The Way You Look To-night* and *Easy to Love*. Two film tunes scorched on both sides by that little brown bird, Billie Holiday. Also incline the ear to the Wilson piano and some nice alto sax by Johnny Hodges. (Vocalion S.184-A.)

ROSETTA HOWARD AND HER HARLEM HAMFATS.—*If You're a Viper* and *Rosetta Blues*. You don't have to be a viper to catch on to the real thing in Harlem folk tunes. Sky is high and so am I, sings Rosetta. You will be, too. (Vocalion S.202-A.)

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*London Bridge Is Falling Down* and *Stop Beatin' Around the Mulberry Bush*. Harlem's No. 1 swing band finds something old to dress up in new clothes. You may disagree, but you'll listen just the same. (Brunswick 02658-A.)

KEN JOHNSON AND HIS WEST INDIAN DANCE ORCHESTRA.—*Snakehips Swing* and *Exactly Like You*. A weak rhythm section lets down an English swing band of outstanding soloists and talent. The stuff is there, but it's not mellow as yet. (Decca F.6854.)

THE SPENCER TRIO.—*Baby Won't You Please Come Home* and *Lorna Doone Short Bread*. Piano, clarinet and drums that spent an afternoon in Africa with such swell results decline into just another trio. Buster Bailey is still tops on the black stick, though. (Brunswick 02657-A.)

WOODY HERMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*Carolina In The Morning* and *Trouble In Mind*. A white band leader that sings the blues like a negro and a white band that sounds as if it should be playing in Harlem. You'll like the swingy version of your old favourite *Carolina*. (Vocalion S.201-B.)

"FATS" WALLER AND HIS CONTINENTAL RHYTHM.—*Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Don't Try Your Jive On Me*. Typical Harlem jive in the best Waller manner recorded right here in England at the H.M.V. studios. Fats kicks out on the organ and sings at his merriest top. (H.M.V. BD-5415.)

BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*You Forgot To Remember* and *Blue Skies*. Two Goodman classics from out of the past re-issued for the film. The band was its top when these were made and represent a grand sing coupling. (H.M.V. B8809.)

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BOOK REVIEWS

IT is axiomatic that the movies need a historian. Unfortunately, writing about the movies has got into the hands of people who have taken up the cinema only in the last few years.

Going to see Mr. Cochran's *Flashbacks*, or sitting through the recent revivals of Rudolph Valentino's films, it became clear that most of the critics who attended these performances never went to the movies at all in the old silent days. In those days the movies were patronised by ordinary people who paid a few coppers and who, by doing so, made possible its present pre-eminence, while the yahoos of culture were busy proclaiming the cinema a "nine days wonder" and feverishly yapping about the plays of such as Bernard Shaw, Granville Barker and Oscar Wilde.

Now that such things fall rather flat, these people go to the movies to write articles about films they see. They have done their best to take all the action, guts and character out of the films. They like talkie-talkies and they don't like action. They are now discovering what the ninepennies discovered years ago, that such tough nuts as Spencer Tracy, Jimmy Cagney and Paul Muni are great actors.

They spend their free evenings writing histories of the Movies and one of them has just appeared called *History of the Film* by Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach (Allen & Unwin, 18*s*.). Typical view of these two philosophers of the film is this one about W. C. Fields—"In *If I Had a Million*, only the most tenacious fans could tolerate Fields, when he called his plump lady friend 'My bird,' or 'My chicken'. Most of his more recent films are excellent. They are light-hearted affairs full of raillery, occasionally quite witty and always lacking the vulgarity of his earlier vehicles. The celebrated *If I Had a Million* was far from meriting the success it obtained and has already been forgotten. . . . Its verbal comedy was tiring as was also the film about the English manservant in America, *Ruggles of Red Gap*."

Or this one about Douglas Fairbanks at the height of his fame—"He made *Robin Hood* in which the story is garbled so light-heartedly that it would be absurd to take anybody to task about it. A new fairyland opened before him: he had won Mary Pickford's love, a great deal of fame and any number of dollars."

Boiled down, their point of view about films is best revealed in the statement that the coming of the talkies showed "that whatever illusion we may have to the contrary, the film is a slave to fashion and to the vulgarest of influences."

The useful thing about the book is that it gives a great deal of information about the early film industry in Italy, Russia, Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

It is time that somebody who likes going to the movies wrote a history of them. R.C.

MISS LANCHESTER must have sat down one day and said to herself: "I might as well write a book while Charles is doing 'St. Martin's Lane'!" You have only to look at the correspondence column of any film paper to see that everybody is interested in everything to do with films stars. And here was Miss Lanchester with a film star right on the family hearthrug. So *Charles Laughton and I* (Faber and Faber, 8*s*. 6*d*.) is a series of chapters about what Charles was doing at a given time, and what 'I' was doing at the same time. It is inevitably more concerned with 'I' than with Charles Laughton, but Mr. Laughton, hovering somewhere in the middle distance, emerges as a pleasant sort of person, with an enormous capacity for hard work and an obvious integrity of purpose.

Doubtless many people would think it both stimulating and important to know what Shakespeare was doing between lunch and dinner on May 8th, 1599. Posterity will only have to reach out a hand and take *Charles Laughton and I* from the shelf to discover that Miss Lanchester used green face powder, magenta lipstick and mauve eye shadow, that she was double jointed, and that she re-arranged the flowers twice a week. They may similarly discover that Mr. Laughton went to Hollywood and found Miss Norma Shearer charming and easy to get on with; that he came back to the Old Vic and found Miss Baylis not so charming and not so easy to get on with, and that when he was living in the country he spent most of the day in his pyjamas.

But maybe the publishers are overstating the case when they say that this is "one of the best and most intimate biographies that has ever been written."

M. GLOCK.

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At the Venice Exhibition

Strand Films : FIVE FACES, WATCH AND WARD IN THE AIR, MONKEY INTO MAN

T.I.D.A. Films (Produced by Strand): THE BRITISH NAVY, OF ALL THE GAY PLACES

At the Malvern Festival

At the Malvern Picture House Pageant of British Films, all the shorts were Strand Films
ZOO BABIES, MITES AND MONSTERS, ZOO AND YOU, WATCH AND WARD IN THE AIR, LONDON WAKES UP

At the British Association

Special show of MONKEY INTO MAN, MITES AND MONSTERS

On the B.B.C. "Promenades"

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